The *Romioi* of Constantinople: Historiographical, Visual and Mnemonic representations

Evdokia Sarridou

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Student Name: Evdokia Sarridou

SID: 2201130017
Supervisor: Prof. Eftihia Voutyra

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to understand the Greek-Orthodox of Constantinople through their historical course from the Byzantine period till nowadays, through the way they were depicted by the cinematographic lens as well as through the oral narratives of both themselves and other people who lived with them. Since they are the oldest community of the cosmopolitan Constantinople, their history is inextricably linked to the long history of the city. However, today the community does not count more than a few thousand souls. So, the question that arises is whether the community has a future or not. Despite the fact that its demographic collapse is a bad omen for its existence, there are still many optimistic voices and efforts from the Greek-Orthodox who still live in Constantinople and from those who do not live there anymore. The data and observations we explore here are based, apart from the historical sources, on two films as well as published and unpublished oral narratives, which address two of the milestones for the community. These are the riots of September 1955 and the deportations of 1964, when the Greek-Orthodox community was the sole target of Turkish nationalism. Based on these events and their consequences the issue of nostalgia and the way their identity and collective memory formed will be raised.

Keywords: Greek-Orthodox, collective memory, nostalgia, identity, oral history

Evdokia Sarridou
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Preface

For the writing of this thesis I would like to thank separately all my professors who contributed with their help in writing of this thesis. First of all, I thank my professor and supervisor Dr. Eftihia Voutyra for her helpful comments and guidance in the making of this thesis. I would also like to thank professor Dr. Nikolaos Raptopoulos, who was recommended to me by Dr. Eftihia Voutyra and who accepted with great willingness to correct and comment part of my work. He also proposed me a proper bibliography and shared his information and views in order my thesis to be, as far as possible, more comprehensive. I am also grateful to my professor Dr. Dimitrios Kontogeorgis, who devoted part of his valuable time to also comment section of my thesis, but also for encouraging us throughout the year and helping us understand what a difficult work actually writing an essay is. A big, big thank you goes to professor Dr. Stelios Sotiriou since he was always present when I needed him and who throughout this entire year worked tirelessly to teach us how to write a proper paper. It would be a great omission on my part if not thank my mentor Giorgos Antoniou about the moral and practical support when I sometimes found myself at an impasse.

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Contents

Introduction

The presence of the Greek-Orthodox community in Constantinople, is in lockstep with the history of the city. Being the oldest community of multicultural Constatinople, the Greek-Orthodox are distinguished from the other, non-Muslim populations. First of all, their contribution to the development of the city is attested by many buildings, such as houses, schools, hospitals as well as places of worship and cemeteries, many of which are true works of art and indicate that the Greek-Orthodox was once a thriving community. Secondly, the other factor that differentiates them from the other non-Muslim populations is related to the changes they experienecd that eventually led to their demographic collapse. Being sometimes the sole target of Turkish nationalsm, the Greek-Orthodox were often forced to leave their city under cruel circumstances, or in other cases, after having reached financial ruin and experienced moral devastation, abandon their homes voluntarily with the expectation to find a better future elsewhere. A series of measures taken by the Turksih state culminating in the pogrom of September 1955 and the mass deportations of 1964 resulted in the Greek-Orthodox community in Constantinople to consist today of a few thousand souls.

Thus, someone reasonably wonders about the fate of the community. Are we talking about a diminishing community which will completely disappear? Even though in today's Turkey many Greek-Orthodox nostalgically reminisce over a lost past when the community was flourishing and estimate that the future of the community is bleak, the majority tries actively to refute such scenarios. For example, they renovate churches, cemeteries and organize honorary ceremonies or gatherings of old classmates that "bring back" to the homeland the Greek-Orthodox who do not live in the city anymore. Furthermore, the teachers, who are the primary defenders of the Greek-Orthodox identity, are not limited in their professional capacity and devote much of their leisure time organizing extracurricular activities for the children, in order for the latter to maintain the Greek-Orthodox consciousness at a time that the effect of extraneous cultural loans is huge.

The hopes of optimists for “extension” or even revival of the community were strengthened by the improvement of relations between Greece and Turkey after the 1999 earthquake in Turkey when Greece had sent significant aid, as well as Turkey’s candidacy for its accession to the European Union, accepted in December 1999. The indispensable reforms for its admission as a state-member of the EU focused, among other things, on the respect for human rights and protection of minorities. However, until nowadays Turkey does not appear to meet all the requirements to join the EU and consequently the path towards that goal is something that will take time.

What is more, the community is protected and supported as far as possible by the Greek-Orthodox spread around the world. Organized associations and unions undertake to maintain the Greek-Orthodox identity and to initiate the younger generations in it. What is more, many of them who are living today outside Constantinople attend and participate in social events and religious celebrations without taking into consideration the significant distance that separates them from their former “homeland”. Thus, those who fled from Constantinople, even though they have adapted to the way of life of the place they now live in, they recall with nostalgia the native land and endeavour to contribute to the preservation of the remaining community.

However, how did the traumatic process of the uprooting affect the formation of an identity of those forced to flee? What did the community members who are away from Constantinople choose to identify themselves with and how does the collective memory work both for those who still live in Constantinople and those who not? The purpose of this thesis is to understand the Greek-Orthodox of Constantinople through their historical course as documented in the books, examine said course as seen from the angle of the cinematographic lens and people’s oral narratives and finally, through this to discuss whether the community is likely to continue to exist or is doomed to disappear. In order to make this possible, the thesis was based on both primary and secondary sources. Thus, for the first part of my work, which is actually a historical review, I used secondary literary sources starting from antiquity to the 20th century. The axis of the second chapter is mainly based on primary sources. In particular it is based on two films titled *Pains*

of Autumn and *A Touch of Spice*. Through these films the pogrom of September 1955 and the deportations of 1964 are analyzed extensively and the effects Turkish nationalism had on the processes of building a Greek-Orthodox identity is examined. After presenting some theoretical definitions of memory and nostalgia, I attempt to integrate them in the case of the Greek-Orthodox community and discuss them. Moreover, I made use of a Greek documentary series titled *Protagonistes*, as well as oral testimonies by the Greek-Orthodox of Constantinople in order to talk about the political agenda of the new Greek-Orthodox generations and the way they perceive the contemporary reality they live in. As we will see below the way they think is quite foreign to and removed from the old generations' conceptions. Last but not least, in this thesis' last chapter after having stressed the significance and contribution of oral history to both the field of historical science and other disciplines, I used published and unpublished oral testimonies of people, in order to show how a place forms the individual and collective memory.

The first chapter focuses on the content of the term Greek-Orthodox, commonly known as *Romioi*, and its variation over time. Today there are many different scientific views about the term which thereby create confusion as to its understanding. Therefore, I considered that it would be helpful for the reader to begin by discussing this issue in order to provide a clear picture, as much as possible, about the content of the term and its development. Thus, this chapter is divided into three parts starting from the Roman Empire when Constantine the Great established the New Rome in the ancient city of Byzantion (later renamed Constantinople) and the term Roman was used to address every citizen of the Empire. During the Ottoman period, the population of the empire was divided into millets (communities) on the basis of religion and ethnicity. The millet system dominated by the Muslim millet, consisted also of the Greek-Orthodox (Millet-i Rum), Armenian and Jewish millets. Regarding the term Rum (Romios) which derives from the term Roman, it was used to refer to the members of the Rum milleti, which was composed exclusively of Orthodox people regardless their ethnicity or language. Under the millet system and particularly with the subsequent reforms of the Tanzimat, the millets enjoyed some privileges and a kind of freedom.

The transition from the Ottoman Empire to the newly established Turkish Republic in 1923 brought changes, since it was based on different principles from those of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey's fundamental aim was to create a homogenous state under a common national identity. Thus, while all citizens were regarded as "Turks", regardless their origins (ethnicity, religion, mother tongue) and despite the recognition of non-Muslim populations as minorities with the simultaneous recognition of their "rights" stipulated by the Lausanne Treaty, in practice they were always considered to be second-class citizens. The "Turkification" policy applied by the Turkish state essentially aimed at the weakening and eventually extermination of the Greek-Orthodox community. The milestone dates for the irreversible decline of the Greek-Orthodox community that will be discussed in this thesis are 1941 (yirmi kura ihtiyat), 1942 (varlık vergisi), 1955 (the Septemvriana) and 1964 (the mass deportations).

The second chapter consists of two sections that deal mostly with the riots of September 1955 and the deportations of 1964, specifically as seen through the cinematographic lens and specifically, as mentioned above, through the movies *Pains of Autumn* and *A Touch of Spice*. The chapter concludes with a reference to the Greek-Orthodox of today Constantinople and Athens including the old and new generations, the dreams of the latter and expectations of the elders. To be more specific, the first section begins with a historical report on the situation that led to the outbreak of the Septemvriana and later on the riots per se are analyzed in conjunction with the way the latter were depicted in the *Pains of Autumn*. How did the Turkish director of the film see the events and how did the Turkish audience react when they watched the movie, given that they knew little about the *Septemvriana*? What impact did these events have on the Greek-Orthodox community, what were the dilemmas they faced and to what extent was their identity affected?

As far as the second section is concerned, it deals with the interval between 1955 and 1964, when thousands of Greek-Orthodox holding the Greek citizenship were uprooted from their home taking with them the members of their family who were often of Turkish nationality. Based on these events but without making a deeper analysis of them, the film *A Touch of Spice* is an oral history structured

mostly by memories. It is narrated by a Greek-Orthodox, just like the director of the film, who tells the story of his family before and after the expulsions of 1964, how they were received in Greece, their difficult adjustment in the host country and eventually his reconciliation with the past. As already mentioned and since the film touches on general issues that pertain to memory and nostalgia for the lost home, I found it necessary to present the theoretical definitions of them. Furthermore, we will analyze how they organized their lives in Athens, the problems they faced, as well as how they now identify themselves and what kind of relations they retain with Constantinople.

Last but equally important, the section refers to the younger generations of Greek-Orthodox in Constantinople, which are quite different from the older ones in the way they perceive the current situation. Given that they did not experience the same events like their forefathers and living in a society where the whole situation is currently smoother, young people interact openly with their peers outside of the community. Politically, they also express themselves, relatively, more openly and vindicate, along with others, their generations' rights.

In the last chapter of this thesis the role of collective memory through oral narratives will be presented. The chapter which is divided into two parts opens with a brief discussion on the role of oral history as presented by Paul Thompson. Being the first form of history, it allows for more voices from all backgrounds to be heard, thusly rendering history more democratic. Hence, the first section examines the oral narratives of residents, Muslims and non-Muslims, of a cosmopolitan neighbourhood in Constantinople. The aforementioned residents still live in the city and were up until the riots of September 1955 coexisting harmoniously with other residents stemming from different ethnoreligious backgrounds. The narratives focus on an ideal coexistence and the events of September. Indeed, they are of great interest since in most cases the residents avoid speaking loudly about the events or they even claim that the riots never took place in their neighbourhood.

The second section deals with the oral narratives of Greek-Orthodox from various, also cosmopolitan neighbourhoods of the city, related again to the daily coexistence of different elements and their experience of the *Septemvriana*. The fact that these people reside today in Greece makes their narratives diverge from

those shown in the first section. They speak more openly of the tensions that existed and separated the different elements making up the neighbourhoods and of the riots of September, 1955.

To conclude, regarding the future of the community, there are voices that argue that sooner or later it is doomed to disappear, whilst there are those who are optimistic and expect its revival. In any case, no answer can be given with certainty, since as history has proved the fate of the Greek-Orthodox depends largely on balanced relations between Greece and Turkey, as well as political developments in the latter, such as for instance its integration into the European Union.

1. The *Romioi*: From premodern to modern perceptions of a term

There is an ongoing scholarly discussion on the Greek-Orthodox community of Constantinople, commonly known as *Romioi*[1], and just as many different views, which cause perplexity and difficulties in understanding this term. Things get more complicated if somebody takes into consideration that the content of the term has changed in the course of history. For this reason it is necessary to explore the roots of the term *Romios* and follow the mutations of its content over time.

1.1 The term *Roman* and its evolution during the Roman Empire

The city of ancient Byzantion, which was to become the capital of the Roman Empire, was a Megarian colony founded in the 7th century B.C. The conflicts in and political instability of Rome during the Roman period (particularly since 314 A.D.), led to the weakening of the empire and eventually to the monocracy of Constantine the Great (324-337). The latter searched for a new place to establish the empire's capital. Thus, in 324 A.D. Constantine the Great transferred his new capital from Rome to Byzantion under the name of New Rome. The inauguration of the new capital, which later was renamed Constantinople in honour of its founder, took place in 330 A.D. (Athanasiadi-Fowden, 1978: 32-33, 35,39). But, why did Constantine the Great choose this specific place to establish the new capital? A rather obvious reason is the location of the city in itself. Built on an ideal geographical position, between Europe and Asia and surrounded by the Aegean, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, Constantinople was protected naturally. Additionally, the city was fortified with impressive walls and any attempt at an invasion was proven to be extremely difficult (Doumanis, 2013:20).

[1] In Greek, the term *Romios* is found as *Ρωμιός* or *Ρωμηός*. Even though in most modern dictionaries the word is found as *Ρωμιός*, written with iota (-ι), the correct spelling of the word is considered to be with an eta (-η), *Ρωμηός*, demonstrating in that way the perpetuation of the long vowel ligatures -*αι* in a long eta (-η) (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:9).

Despite the fact that Constantine the Great was a zealous supporter and protector[2] of Christianity, he did not attempt to prohibit the citizens of New Rome from worshipping the ancient gods (Athanasiadi-Fowden, 1978: 35). At this point it should be mentioned that since Rome came into contact with the Greek civilization as early as the 3rd century B.C. (after its first war with Carthage in 264-241 B.C.), Greeks and Romans shared many characteristics. Consequently, since by the end of the 3rd century B.C. a large number of Romans knew the Greek language quite well, whilst, among other things, Greek architecture was influenced by the Roman (Bowersock, 1976:112). Therefore, when in 330 A.D. the capital of Old Rome was transferred to the East, the two civilizations were no strangers to each other. The religious policy applied by the most important emperors of the empire, from Constantine to Theodosius I the Great (379-395)[3] till Justinian I, turned Constantinople into the cradle of Christianity.

What is more, the social and religious policies reflected directly on the culture of the empire. The new capital had to have a semblance to the Old one and thus new magnificent buildings, similar to those in Rome, were constructed in Constantinople, like a senate house and baths; churches of great architecture were built as well (Ousterhout, 2010:124,127). In the field of Letters and sciences the University of Constantinople[4] was reorganized thanks to Eudocia Augusta, the wife of Theodosius II, while during Justinian's reign the higher educational institutions of Alexandria, Caesarea of Cappadocia and Athens were closed down and legal studies were gathered in the schools of law of Constantinople, Rome and Beirut (Karagiannopoulos, 2001:90,109).

The term *Roman* characterized every citizen of the empire, irrespective of their place of origin, and it was far from a derogatory title. The *Romans* considered

[2] With the Edict of Milan, the decree for religious tolerance, signed in 313 A.D., Constantine the Great legalized the Christian religion, protecting in that way the Christians who were being persecuted until then by the Romans.

[3] Theodosius I convened, in Constantinople, the second Ecumenical Council in 381 and declared Christianity as the state religion and took strict measures against pagans and heretics (Karagiannopoulos, 2001:86)

[4] Known as Imperial University of Constantinople (Karagiannopoulos 2001:90).

themselves heirs to, descendants of the culture of the Eastern Roman Empire[5]. As opposed to the term *Roman,* the term *Greek* had already acquired a religious connotation the period of New Rome, which lasted throughout the Middle Ages. *Greek (Hellene)* became synonymous with the word "pagan" as it was used to define the religion of the Greeks (Filippidis, 1994:45). As it is indicated through Mark's Gospel and other ecclesiastical texts, the above mentioned term, encompassing a religious connotation, seems to have existed and been used since the first centuries of Christianity before its spread and prevalence. Particularly, in Mark's Gospel we encounter the description of a "Hellenis, Syro-Sidonian" woman (Filippidis, 1994:45). Thus, it becomes obvious that the origin of the woman is defined by "Syro-Sidonian" and the word *Hellinis* means that she was not Christian.

It is worthwhile to mention, that the average people until the early 20th century believed that the Greeks were some ancient, pagan people (Filippidis, 1994:48). This notion is reflected in numerous testimonies of ordinary people in Ioannis Kakridis' work titled *The Ancient Greeks in Modern Greek, Folk Tradition (Oi Archaioi Ellines sti Neoelliniki Laïki Paradosi)*, where the term Greek was used to refer to a race of husky people to whom however they did not feel related to or a continuation of (Kakridis, 1978).

During the Middle Byzantine era (565-1081) the strong fluctuations the empire faced determined its fate. Invaders from different directions weakened the empire that tried to defend itself on several open fronts. Among the enemies, like Persians, Slavs and Lombards, the Arabs, who during the 7th century had conquered Persia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Armenia and North Africa were the toughest, managing to deal a heavy blow to the greatly shrinking empire. However, their attempts to besiege Constantinople during the 7th and 8th centuries bore no fruit (Karagiannopoulos, 2001:119-131). After a period of approximately three hundred years, during which the Empire expanded, was reorganized and succeeded in

[5] After Theodosious' reign the power was transferred to his sons, Onorios and Arcadios. The first ruled the western part of the empire, while Arcadius was responsible for the eastern one. From that period onwards, the empire was divided into two parts, though theoretically it was considered united. Karagiannopoulos points out that in the western part the dominant language was Latin and the culture was based on that of Rome, whereas in the eastern part Greek was spoken and the culture had its roots in the Hellenistic tradition (Karagiannopoulos, 2001: 88-89).

repelling its enemies, it fell again into a period of decline and stagnation. Due to political instability and reductions in military spending, the empire stayed vulnerable to the simultaneous attacks of the Normans, Hungarians, Pechenegs and Seljuk Turks (Karagiannopoulos, 2001:193). The latter were Oghuz Turks from Central Asia, who invaded Anatolia during the 10th century. They managed to become a great power by assimilating other Turkic tribes and in 1045 they started attacking the empire. After the battle of Matzikert (1071), where the Byzantines were defeated, they continued their attacks in order to consolidate their presence in the region gaining control over a large part of Asia Minor by 1081 (Karagiannopoulos, 2001:187, 194-197).

The late Byzantine era (1081-1453) was marked by many vicissitudes. The remarkable leadership abilities of emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118) revived once again the empire and lent it its former status (Karagiannopoulos, 2001:199). However, that flourish did not last and when the Fourth Crusade was launched in 1204, Constantinople fell under the rule of the Latins. During the reign of Michael VIII Palaeologos, the capital was recaptured in 1261, but could never be restored to its former glory (Karagiannopoulos, 2001:223-224). It was in this climate of fluidity that the Ottoman emirate emerged in the early 14th century. Having turned its attention to the Balkans, the Empire neglected the East, giving the Ottomans under Osman plenty leeway to establish an emirate within Bithynia. The end of the Byzantine Empire and the beginning of the Ottoman came about under Mehmed II, successor of Murad II, who conquered Constantinople on May 29th, 1453 (Karagiannopoulos, 2001:251, 256, 276).

1.2 The term *Romios* during the Ottoman Empire

The conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans launched a new era with the latter as the main protagonist. The co-existence of Islam and Christianity, as well as the cohabitation of distinctive, non-Muslim communities that were incorporated into the empire, were issues that needed to be regulated by the new empire. The administrative structure of the Ottoman Empire was inseparable from the religious law, the *Shariah*. Consequently, Islam was not a mere religion separate from the

political scene. In contrast, the state operated in accordance to the *Shariah*. The religious laws became most of the time laws of the state (Sarris, 1990:35-36). Thus, according to Islamic law the non-Muslim peoples, mainly the Christians and Jews, called *dhimmis*, were regarded as the "People of the Book" (ehl-i kitab) and enjoyed a kind of religious freedom, as well as the protection of the state. Nonetheless, this protection entailed often burdensome and humiliating restrictions. In reality the *dhimmis* paid for this protection granted by the state by means of a special tax, the so-called head tax (*cizye* or *kefalikos* in Greek). Other restrictions they underwent were related to their appearance, religion or daily life in general. Therefore, they were not entitled to dress like Muslims, or ride a horse; their buildings, including churches, had to be lower than those of Muslims (Barkey, 2008). However, Neoklis Sarris points out that the rights and obligations of the *dhimmis* were not predetermined, with the exception of the head tax, but regulated by occasion (Sarris, 1990:247). In any case non-Muslims were considered to be second-class citizens within the empire.

In order for each Sultan to be able to administer more effectively the different elements that inhabited the empire, the *millet* system was established. This system addressed all non-Muslim communities and its special characteristic was the fact that it was based on religion and not on ethnicity, even though the word "*millet*" means nation (Alexandris, 1992:21). That is why it is estimated that the term *millet* is quite recent, with origins in the 19th century when we encounter also the emergence of nationalism. Until then, the concept of "nation" was still dim and distant. Therefore, it is supported that the word *cemaat* (community) was being widely used in order to describe non-Muslim communities (Sarris, 1990:266).

The *millet* system consisted of the Greek-Orthodox (Millet-i Rum), the Jewish and the Armenian *millets.* Each of these communities enjoyed some privileges and some kind of autonomy in exchange for their loyalty to the Sultan. More specifically, the *Rum milleti*, which encompassed all the Orthodox people of the Ottoman Empire[6] regardless their place of origin or their different spoken languages, was led by the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch (Alexandris, 1992:21-22). He was the so-called

[6] Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians, Vlachs and Romanians.

Millet-başı, which means "the head of the nation" (*Ethnarhis*), in this case head of the community, and hence he had responsibilities related to the community. The Millet leaders had jurisdiction over the communities' internal affairs. For instance, the Millet-başı collected the taxes and had control over the affairs related to the educational and religious life. He was also accountable for all legal issues with the exception of the criminal cases, which fell under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman authorities (Alexandris, 1992:22). In other words, the Ecumenical Patriarch was the executive body of the Sultan and simultaneously the only and main responsible for the smooth operation of the community. In case the Patriarch was not able to ensure the required orderly functioning of the community, he was held accountable and paid with his own life (Sarris, 1990:273-274)[7].

As regards to the word *Rum* (*Romios*), it derives from the term *Roman* and refers to the descendants of the Eastern Roman Empire (Doumanis, 2013:9). During the Ottoman era the term was being used to refer to the members of the *Rum milleti*. The difference in the content of the term *Romios* between the two ages (Byzantine and Ottoman) is that even though in both cases it attributes religious substance, during the Ottoman Empire it specifies strictly the religion. It is probably safe to assume that the *millet* system provided some sort of religious identity to the members of these communities and as Smith claims religious communities are closely connected to the identities of ethnies (Smith, 1991:6). The features of an ethnie, a term used by Smith (1991) to define ethnic groups, are:

1. a collective proper name
2. a myth of common origin
3. shared historical memories
4. one or more differentiating elements of common culture
5. an association with a specific "homeland"
6. a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population (p. 21)

[7]One notable example is the case of Patriarch Gregory V, who was charged with incompetence in preventing the revolt of the Greek-Orthodox in Peloponnese and was punished accordingly by hanging (Sarris, 1990:274).

As already mentioned, the *Rum milleti* comprised, apart from the Greeks (Hellenes), also of other people, who were aware of their distinctions. However, since all of these different groups of people, met some of the above traits they were considered as a whole to be an ethnie.

The status of the *millet* system began to change after a period of continuous weakening for the Ottoman state. The first signs of the empire's decline began to appear after the end of the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566) and they were the outcome of both internal and external factors. As far as the internal ones are concerned, the outdated constitution of the economy, army and administration, the depopulation of the countryside, with farmers abandoning it due to high taxation and other factors that hindered their stay, the government's corruption and the weakness of the Ottoman state to keep pace with the technological developments of the West, led to the emergence of various problems and to the weakening of the empire's external policy (Giallouridis & Langidis, 2010:59). Thus, the Ottomans' defeat during their second attempt to lay siege to Vienna in 1683, is regarded as a landmark in the empire's course. However, the fact which utterly shaped its fate and led it to disintegration was its defeat in the war with Russia (1768-1774) (Lewis, 1958). The terms of the Kuchuk Kainardji (Küçük Kaynarca) treaty signed in 1774 were unbearable for the declining empire which, among others, was forced to raise the trade restrictions imposed on Russia, according to which the latter could not maintain a fleet at the Black Sea. In turn, Russia allowed Greek ships flying the Russian flag to sail unhindered in the Black Sea. In addition, the treaty also granted Russia the right to protect the Orthodox Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Related to this issue, however, a controversy among historians has arisen. Some of them claim that the treaty indeed granted Russia the right to protect the Orthodox Christians, while other historians argue that Russia gained the right merely to represent the Christian subjects before the Ottoman government. In any case, it is certain that thanks to the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji, St. Petersburg was given free range to meddle in the internal affairs of the empire (Davison, 1976).

Realising the declining course of the empire that led to certain disintegration, the European powers engaged in a struggle to divide between them the "garments"

of the moribund empire, known also as the “Sick man of Europe”. This is regarded as the beginning of the so-called Eastern Question and the rivalry between the Great Powers. On the one hand Russia sought an exit to the Mediterranean, thus jeopardizing the interests of England, whilst on the other hand the latter strove for the conservation of the Ottoman Empire, since the latter was considered a natural barrier to Russian expansionist policy (Anderson, 1966).

Meanwhile, the emergence of nationalism in the 19th century, as well as the Enlightenment and the French revolution introduced a new era of changes in several domains for both the Ottoman Empire and the rest of the world. Although the modernization effort began in the 18th century, it culminated in the 19th during the *Tanzimat* era (1839-1876). This was a reform period inaugurated during Sultan Abdülmecid’s I reign (1839-1861) when an official imperial decree, the *Hatt-ı Şerif* of Gülhane, was issued in 1839. This edict reflected the empire’s last chance to be modernized, incorporating the Western model of life (Davison, 1963). Consisted largely of the European-educated Ottoman elite, the inspirers of *Hatt-ı Şerif* intended to improve the function of the administrative, judiciary and military institutions of the empire, as well as to provide protection and equality in the eyes of the law to all ottoman subjects, irrespective of their different origin or creed (Davison, 1963).

Yet, the highlight of the *Tanzimat* era was the second reform decree, *Hatt-ı Hümayun*. Issued in 1856 and under heavy pressure by the European powers, the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* focused on the equal treatment of all subjects of the empire. This equality reflected in fields, such as taxation, education, appointments of government officials and the participation of all in all administrative and judicial bodies. The imperial edict of 1856 promised to apply the reforms of the *Hatt-ı Şerif*, as well as to legalize the *millet*s (Davison, 1963). What is more, this period served as the springboard for the Ottomans’ partial “independence” from the *Shariah*, with the example of granting the Ottoman citizenship (*Ottomanism*) to non-Muslims aimed at the renewal of the empire composing of nationals with equal rights, while at the same time it led to the creation of some kind of patriotism (Davison, 1963).

While the reformative course of the empire continued during the reign of Abdülaziz (1861-1876), a leader willing to respect in practice the rights of non-

Muslims, the first reactions and their results were already a fact. Although, a perfect equivalence among the subjects of the empire was never implemented, it would be an omission not to say that the institution of communities was undoubtedly reinforced by the reforms of the *Tanzimat* (Alexandris, 1992:26-27). Thus, the members of the *millets* were given the right to hold high offices within the government. They were recruited for educational, administrative, judiciary even diplomatic posts, they were released from paying the head tax (*cizye*) as well as they could now be represented by local administrative councils (Davison, 1963). On the other hand, some reforms of the *Tanzimat* were not always welcomed by the non-Muslims and gave them reason to complain. For instance, prior to the *Tanzimat* era they were exempted from military service; now they were required to carry it out. According to Davison it would be foolish to assume that the equality in military service was accepted gladly by Christians, since at the same time Turks themselves avoided it whenever possible. Moreover, the equal treatment promoted by the *Tanzimat* was a disappointment to the *Rum milleti*, which until then had primacy over the other non-Muslims (Davison, 1963:59). Nevertheless, these reforms generally fostered the *millets,* allowed their members to feel more confident and bolstered their identity, whereas concurrently created an ambiance of uncertainty and discontent among the Muslim subjects.

1.2.1 19th century: the period of nationalism and the Greek nation

As already mentioned the 19th century was the era of nationalism. During this period a strong tendency towards the creation of independent states was detected in the Ottoman Balkans. However, before that the national awakening was a prerequisite. The Enlightenment movement and its spread throughout Europe had a significant impact on this process. The universal nature of the Enlightenment movement, which represented ideals such as the freedom of thought, rationalism and the shaking off of anything reminiscent of medieval times was adopted and

adapted[8] by the Balkan peoples in order to liberate themselves from the Ottoman yoke (Sfetas, 2009:123; Kitromilidis, 1996). Thus, the role of the Church in the preservation of the medieval tradition, as well as contact with Europe and the influence of Enlightenment principles resulted in the national awakening of the Greeks, who revolted in 1821 in order to unite all Greek populations living within the Ottoman Empire's boundaries (Kitromilidis, 1996:85-86; Sfetas, 2009: 130-133). However, who were in reality the Greeks (Hellenes) that constituted the Greek state? Were they only those whose native language was Greek or also those who in spite of them being Orthodox Christians their mother tongue was not Greek? As Koliopoulos observes the interpretation of the words "Hellene" or "Hellas" varied depending on the origin and education of those who used them. For instance, according to Isocrates Greek was considered anyone who received a Greek education, stressing thereby the significance of culture over that of language for forming the identity (Koliopoulos, 2003:35-36). Athanasios Stagiritis, who lived at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, believing that language was an incontrovertible feature of ethnies (ethnic communities), and nations later, claimed that nations are divided by language. According to him religion does not lead to segregation of the nation. To justify his view, he used the example of the European countries which in spite of them having the same religion use different languages and are consequently divided into different nations, such as English, French, German, Italian etc (Koliopoulos, 2003:63).

What is more, the national awakening of the Greeks influenced to a great extent some other coreligionist Balkan populations, like the Bulgarians, who "came in contact" with the ideas of Enlightenment through the Greeks. These populations established schools, where students, not of Greek origin, received an education and were taught Greek as well as the principles of Enlightenment. Hence the term "Greek" came to mean the "emancipated person". In many cases when the Slavs

[8] Regarding the way the Age of Enlightenment was expressed in the Balkan region and West some differences are spotted. For instance, the West put emphasis firstly in the rationalism, while the concept of nation followed. In the Balkan area the opposite happened. Secondly, in the West was observed an inclination to the science and the natural laws. On the contrary, in the Balkans, the importance of the tradition had the leading role. Last but not least, the Westerners' rational view turned against the Church's oppression, whilst for the Balkan populations the Church was the key element in their national awakening (Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, 2000:65).

became part of the middle class they adopted the Greek identity (Sfetas, 2009:237,241).

All these results derived from the forming of the Greek merchants class and its intense activity during the 18th century in the West, where they came into contact with the principles of Enlightenment and the prevailing view that Greece is the basis of Western civilization and thus themselves descendants of this "founding" culture[9]. This led to the formation of a Greek Orthodox Balkan intelligentsia, under whose "enlightened" influence Greek nationalism was born at the expense of the Greek-Orthodox identity (Friedman, 1992:839). But why did Greek nationalism develop at the expense of the aforementioned identity? We must take into consideration that the distinguished scholar Adamantios Korais, who was an ardent supporter of modernity and one of the most important representatives of the Greek Enlightenment, supported and enhanced the historical continuity between ancient Greeks (Hellenes) and modern ones, rejected flatly the Byzantine, Orthodox past of the Greek-Orthodox. Parenthetically however, it should be mentioned that unlike Adamantios Korais, historians such as Konstantinos Paparygopoulos did not reject the Byzantine past of the Greek-Orthodox people. Instead, according to the latter, the Byzantine Empire was the framework that maintained Greek ethnicity and education and secured its survival through the changes of the Roman conquest and barbarian invasions (Kitromilidis, 1996:485). The attitude of Korais is justified by the fact that he envisioned a Greek-Orthodox identity less dependent on religion and more secularized (Roudometof, 2002:70-72; Roudometof, 1998:32). According to Korais, for the purpose of making this attainable, great emphasis should be given to education in order for modern Greeks to become worthy heirs of their ancestors. Thus, he attempted to renew the Greek language, abolishing all non-Greek words and replacing them with equivalent ancient ones (Roudometof, 2002:71; Roudometof, 1998:25). The term of Western origin "*Γραικός*" (Greek) which was already in use, albeit limited use, was popularized by Korais, who chose to use this ethnonym in order to determine the Greek-Orthodox saying "I suggested Greeks,

[9] Here, the word "Greek-Hellene" does no longer retain the mean it previously held, when it was used to express "heathen". Its meaning now is identical to the definition for absolute civilization (Friedman, 1992:840)

because all the enlightened nations of Europe also name us as such" (Koliopoulos 2003:72-73).

While the term "Hellene" as well as "Hellenic nation" was adopted from the very beginning of the Greek revolution mainly by the revolutionary powers in southern Greece, the ethnonym "*Γραικός*" was preferred before and during the Revolution by those who desired to orient the nation towards *Esperia* (Western Europe). Last but not least, even though the word "Hellene" was not in wide usage during the Revolution, it finally prevailed without however eliminating the terms "*Γραικός*" (Greek) and "*Ρωμηός*" (Greek-Orthodox) (Koliopoulos, 2003:73-74).

Yet, the aspirations of Korais did not find resonance with all Greek-Orthodox. Since many of them held prominent positions in public administration within the Ottoman Empire, and therefore considered themselves privileged, they remained loyal subjects of the Sublime Porte and did not desire any change. On the contrary, they preferred to maintain and advance the religious identity of the *Rum milleti,* rather than proceed to its secularization[10]. These Greek-Orthodox, who were not in favor of the 1821's revolt, were considered to be traitors by the Greeks in Greece (Doumanis, 2013:31-32). Generally, a distinction emerged between *Romioi* (Greek-Orthodox) and Greeks (nationals). In order to explain what this meant in practice, the following passage of Doumanis' work (2013) is cited below:

> The Byzantinist Peter Charanis recalled as a boy a moment of cultural dissonance on Limnos in 1912, after the Greek navy seized the remaining Ottoman-controlled islands. Soldiers were perplexed when the boy referred to them as "Greeks" and to himself as a "Romios" (p. 32).

For a better understanding of such discrepancies resulting in identity issues, as illustrated above, we should take into account that since the 19th century identities were constantly changing. Anthony Bryer claimed about the Pontic Greeks that "at the beginning of the 19th century they identified in the first instance with locality

[10] At this point, it should be noted that despite the high posts and the close affiliations with the Ottoman authorities they maintained, they did not neglect their community. On the contrary they were dealing with issues related to their Rum community, paying great attention to education (Alexandris, 1992:30).

and clan, “and as …Roman subject[s] of the sultan second”, but that by 1923 they had become “Greeks”, and only later, Pontic Greeks” (Doumanis, 2013:42)

The preparation of the Greek revolution for the establishment of an independent state in the early 19th century, confirmed the distinctions that had been existed among the Greek-Orthodox Balkan communities and consequently it opened the path for the formation of national consciousness and for the desire for the founding of homogenous nation-states. Thus, with the formation of the Greek kingdom (1832), as well as Serbia’s autonomy in 1830 the Ecumenical Patriarchate recognized the establishment of independent churches in both states (Roudometof, 2002:84). On the Bulgarian front however other changes were taking place. Bulgarian nationalism, which had begun to arise in 1840, had been asking initially from the Patriarchate the use of the Bulgarian language in church and the establishment of an autonomous Bulgarian church (Bulgarian Exarchate). However, although Bulgaria’s request was not accepted by the Patriarchate, the reform period of the Ottoman Empire (specifically the *Hatt-ı Hümayun, 1856*) served as a fertile ground for the intensification of the Bulgarian demands, especially for an independent church (Douglas, 1996; Roudometof, 2002: 84-85). Thus, a few years later, in 1868, the Sublime Porte, excluding the participation of the Patriarchate, took charge of the case and allowed Bulgarians to appoint their own bishops and priests, who would be placed in regions where the Bulgarians were the majority. The Ottoman Empire at that time took advantage of the divide created between Greeks and Bulgarians in order to prevent any cooperation of the Balkan peoples, which in turn could potentially lead to an even greater revolt against the Ottoman state (Douglas, 1996; Roudometof, 2002:88). Finally, the Ottoman authorities recognized the Autocephalous Church of Bulgaria by issuing a relevant decree (*firman*) in 1870. Two years later at the Great Synod of Constantinople, the Patriarchate declared the Bulgarian Exarchate schismatic and denounced the “ethnoracialism” within the Church, which was being “exploited” by the Bulgarian Exarchate to implement its national vision (Roudometof, 2002: 88-89). Thus, according to Roudometof “…religious alliances became in effect national alliances; to be a follower of the Exarchate or the Patriarchate was treated as a proclamation of a person’s national identity” (Roudometof, 2002:89).

The Treaty of San Stefano, signed in 1878, terminated the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878). The terms of the treaty were humiliating for the heavily defeated Ottomans. Among the most important, if not the most important term of the treaty, was the creation of a large Bulgarian state which included the greater part of Macedonia (Roudometof, 2002: 89). Needless to say that the terms of the treaty evoked strong reactions from the Great Powers, a fact which led to the decision to revise the treaty in the summer of the same year. With the Treaty of Berlin (1878) Bulgaria ceased to be the great state of the San Stefano Treaty and was split into two autonomous principalities, that of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, while Macedonia was returned outright to the Ottoman Empire. As illustrated, Macedonia was the "apple of discord" mostly among the Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs because the area was inhabited by scattered populations (Roudometof, 2002: 89-90; Sfetas, 2009). The outcome of this confrontation led to the outbreak of the four-year Macedonian Struggle (1904-1908). The hostilities came to an end in 1908 with the movement of the Young Turks and the restoration of the Constitution of 1876. The new policy required the ceasefire that brought an end to the Macedonian Struggle (Gounaris, 2007).

The movement of the Young Turks had its roots in the emerging nationalism cultivated within the Ottoman intellectual circles in the late 19th century. The establishment of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terrâki Cemiyeti) was deeply influenced by the principles of the French Revolution and its members attempted to combine the relevant ideas with a feeling of patriotism. The initial objectives of the movement included the reconstruction of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876, the function of the Ottoman parliament, as well as the peaceful coexistence of all elements, regardless of their nationality or religion (Zurcher, 1992:246,248; Ahmad, 1969). Indeed, according to Doumanis, initially, the daily life of the subjects did not meet with any significant change. The Greek-Orthodox preserved the right to teach in their native language and they had their own educational and religious institutions (Doumanis, 2013:147). Two of several testimonies included in Doumanis' work, *Before the nation* (2013) are the following:

> How could we not be happy? The Young Turks were promising many freedoms. We were embraced by Turks, and they said to us: "we will no longer call you infields. We are now brothers born of the same earth" (p. 145)

> We were fine until 1908, when we were told that we were now like brothers (p. 145)

Nonetheless, the ambiance of equality and democracy was transient and the situation changed completely when the Young Turks changed their policy and attempted to replace the multiethnic empire with a homogenous Turkish nation state applying the method of "Turkification" to all subjects[11]. It is worth mentioning that this policy of homogenization, which was carried out in a violent manner caused many reactions in all ethnicities and minorities and led to various atrocities from massacres to genocides (Giallouridis & Langidis, 2010:68). In response to the policy followed by the Young Turks the Balkan states (Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro) formed an alliance and declared war against the Ottoman Empire. The First Balkan War (1912-1913) ended with the Ottomans having lost most of their European territories. However, the sharing of these areas and mainly of Macedonia proved problematic, which in turn led to the Second Balkan War (1913-1914). This time the war took place between the allies of the First Balkan War and more specifically between Bulgaria and the other three Balkan states and also the Ottoman Empire and Romania (Doumanis, 2013:148).

As far as the First Balkan War is concerned, the fact that the empire was defeated from its former Orthodox subjects, who continued to have contact with the *Rum milleti*, aroused suspicions that during the First Balkan War, Greece received financial aid from the Greek-Orthodox[12]. In any case, the war of 1912-1913 proved disastrous for the "sick man of Europe" and the price to be paid by the Greek-Orthodox as well as Armenians was steep. The CUP (Committee of Union and Progress) which undertook the regulating of such matters, proceeded to dismissals

[11] From the CUP's point of view the shift towards nationalism arose from the arrogant behaviour of the Rum and Armenian leaders, who allowed Ottomans to doubt the loyalty of their subjects (Doumanis, 2013:145).

[12] The Balkan Wars brought approximately 177,000 Muslims in the Greek state. The government minding the Greek-Orthodox of Constantinople kept a neutral position towards them (Doumanis, 2013:148).

of Greek-Orthodox teachers and boycotted Christian entrepreneurs, banning effectively the Turks from buying anything from their shops or having them in their service (Doumanis, 2013:148-149).

During the period of the World War I the hostility and violence of the Young Turks' movement against the Greek-Orthodox intensified. Areas of high strategic significance, like the Aegean shoreline as well as the coast of Asia Minor were literally evacuated almost of all Greek-Orthodox residents who were displaced to the interior of Asia Minor. Needless to say, that most of the times, these cleansings took place under cruel conditions. Almost one year after the opening of the Great War, 60,000 Greek-Orthodox were driven out eastern Thrace and sent to the interior of Asia Minor (Doumanis, 2013:154-155). As Doumanis describes, 45,000 Greeks were forced to leave the region of Çeşme (Krini) and 50,000 to abandon Edremit (Adramyttion), Burhaniye, Bergama (Pergamos), Kınık, Dikili and Foça (Phocaea). The massive wave of persecution forced the Greek-Orthodox to walk long distances under unsuitable weather conditions with no supplies. It was clear that the goal of those marches was their extermination. And actually it was more than successful, since many of them, including the elderly and children were unable to cope with the hardships and eventually died in the transportation. What is more, the young able-bodied men were singled out and were forcibly integrated into labour battalions (*Amele Taburları*) (Doumanis, 2013:150,154-155).

However, the brutalities culminated in the region of Pontus. The population there together with the massive killings that the other Greek-Orthodox faced had also to cope with the rising suspicions that wanted them to collaborate with the Russians, who arrived in the area in 1916 and occupied Trebizond (Doumanis, 2013:156). This fact in accordance with the fate of the Armenians the previous year, led the majority of them to forming guerrilla troops in the mountains. According to Raffi Bedrosyan, the situation deteriorated significantly after the end of World War I in 1919, when Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) arrived in Samsun and organized the systematic extermination of Pontus' Greek-Orthodox having by his side the chette (*çete*) Topal Osman (Bedrosyan, 2014). He was by far the best choice Kemal could have made, as he proved to be a ferocious executioner. More precisely, he and his troop did not hesitate to burn entire villages and their residents alive or to rape the

women left behind alone since their husbands were in the mountains. Doumanis (2013) cites a testimony of the only alive woman of Atta village:

> […]The chettes of Topal Osman came and we were lost. First they killed, then they looted, and then they burned. Two or three women escaped, but they chased them and killed them. Only then did they rape them! I was hidden near the river, inside bushes. I heard the mocking [the dead women] "Aren't you ashamed…" They killed the priest. First they knocked on his door. They broke in and nailed him to the door of the Church. There were many women in Atta that had fled from other villages (p. 156).

The end of World War I entailed also the end of the Ottoman Empire. The victorious powers of Entente as well as the allied Greece were invited to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 in order to define their territorial claims. Hence, with the treaty of Neulliy Bulgaria lost any right to lay claim to Thrace, which passed under Greece's jurisdiction. Yet, it was the treaty of Sèvres, signed in 1920, that sealed the empire's ultimate fragmentation. According to the treaty the "sick man" lost the greatest part of its territorial land, but "he" still retained Constantinople. The treaty granted Greece the islands of Imbros and Tenedos and the whole of Thrace and the Sultan accepted the demand of the Entente to entrust the administration of Smyrna to Greece for a five-year period (Giallouridis & Langidis, 2010:69; Alexandris, 1992). The favourable terms of the treaties for Greece, reignited the hopes for the actualization of the Great Idea (*Megali Idea)* and the creation of the *Megali Ellada,* which were also the main part of the Greek Prime Minister's vision. The policy of Eleftherios Venizelos found many supporters both in Greece and Constantinople (Alexandris, 1992).

By order of the Entente, the Greek army occupied Smyrna in 1919 and under the Congress of Paris' permission it proceeded to conquer territories in Asia Minor. On the other hand, the treaty of Sèvres, which had never been recognized by the Young Turks' movement, in conjunction with the military operations of the Greek military, resulted in a surge of intense nationalistic tendencies, a sample of which have been described above (Alexandris, 1992:65,67). Meanwhile, the fundamental political changes in Greece widened the gap between the supporters of Venizelos and those of King Constantine. In the elections of 1920 the political defeat of

Venizelos brought to power the hostile to the Entente, King Constantine. The outcome of the elections and the Allied forces' anti-royalist position led to a gradual change in attitude towards Greeks and to "isolating" the Greek king (Alexandris, 1992). Constantine continued the military operations and by 1921 the Greek troops had reached Sakarya River, almost a few kilometres away from Ankara. However, the Turkish forces under the leadership of the supreme commander, Mustafa Kemal, managed to displace the Greek troops limiting them in the region of Afyonkarahisar in the summer of 1921. On August 26, 1922, the Kemalists invaded and conquered Smyrna. The epilogue of the war was written with the burning of the city and the persecutions, murders and any kind of exaggerated violence against the Greek-Orthodox and Armenians.

1.3 The term *Romios* in the post-Lausanne treaty period and the declining course of the Greek-Orthodox community

According to Adam Smith, the nations in Western Europe preceded the emergence of nationalism. On the contrary, in non-Western cases the existence of nationalism was a determinant factor for the creation of nations. In his book *National identity*, Smith analyzes two methods leading to the development of nations. Thus, according to him the first one "was the process of bureaucratic incorporation leading to the rise of territorial and civic political nations", while the other was the "process of vernacular mobilization for the creation of ethnic and genealogical political nations" (Smith, 1991:100-101). As far as the first case is concerned, it is divided into two categories; the imperial and the colonial (Smith, 1991:101). Evidently, modern Turkey belongs to the first type, since from an empire it transformed into a nation-state including all those features that, according to Smith, are required in order to become a nation. Briefly, these characteristics include a) an aristocratic base which means that the states are governed by an aristocratic culture pervaded frequently by religious influences, b) the existence of significant ethnic minorities, c) a bureaucratic state with a "modernizing" character and d) the existence of an "official" institutional nationalism, whose ultimate aim would be to

homogenize the population into a solid nation, trying to assimilate the "other", alien features (ethnic minorities). For this reason several principles of what constitutes a nation are launched, with which everyone is required to comply (Smith, 1991:101-102).

The transition from the Ottoman Empire to a new "secular" republic in 1923 could be characterized as a "big bang". The changes that took place were breathtaking, since the Turkish Republic of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (the Father of the Turks) was based on different principles from those of the Ottoman Empire (Beller-Hann, 2001:35). The look westwards for new, contemporary modes of governance and the creation of a homogenized nation under a common national identity was the ultimate ambition of the Turkish state. The leaders of the Turkish National Independence Movement, who during the period of World Word I up until the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 attempted to follow a cleansing policy towards the non-Muslim groups living in the area (Komsuoglu-Birsen, 2009:329). Thus, while in the Ottoman Empire identity was based on religion and the region was dividend into *millets,* the new state accentuated more the role of ethnicity. All the citizens of the Turkish Republic were perceived as "Turks" regardless the religious beliefs or their ethnicity.

The treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923 came to ratify the borders of the modern state and impose the compulsory exchange of the Muslim populations living in Greece with the Orthodox Christians of Turkey. The only exceptions were the Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace, the Greek- Orthodox of Constantinople and those of the Imbros and Tenedos islands. Furthermore, the Greek (Hellene) citizens who settled in Constantinople before 1918 (*établis*) obtained the right to stay and enjoy the same privileges as the Greek-Orthodox[13] (Pentzopoulos, 2002).

What is more, the Treaty of 1923 recognized the Greek-Orthodox, Armenians and Jews of Turkey as non-Muslim minorities and sealed, among others, their

[13] Initially, the Greek citizens could stay in Constantinople for a seven year period. However in 1930, they obtained the right to stay permanently (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007: 38).

rights"[14]. The rights given advocated equality of all citizens before the law, regardless their religious affiliations. More specifically, the articles 39-45 of the Treaty guaranteed the concession of civil and political rights, the right to occupy public office and positions, the permission and assistance from the Turkish government in establishing and protecting churches and other institutions showing respect to their traditions, as well as the right to have their own schools and talk their native language, despite the fact that Turkish was the state's official language. As far as the article 45 is concerned, it confirmed the reciprocal respect and protection of the Muslim and non-Muslims minorities' rights, on the part of both countries (Imvriaki Enosi Makedonias-Thrakis).

Nevertheless, the rights of the non-Muslim minorities and especially, in our case, the Greek-Orthodox remained so far a delicate issue and the Turkish state seemed to have neglected them systematically. After all, the preservation of the minorities' rights was something that had been imposed by the countries of the Entente against the will of the Kemalist regime, which did not hide its intention to dispose of all minorities unless they accepted the unmitigated assimilation in the newborn, homogenous Turkish state (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:111). The priorities of Turkey included the establishment of a national economy which would be controlled exclusively by the Turks. The significant role that mainly Greeks held in the economy of the Ottoman Empire, now was to be diminished as much as possible. Hence, a policy of "Turkification" took also place in the field of economy with the establishment of the National Turkish Commercial Union (Millî Türk Ticaret Birliği) in 1923, which served the purpose to place the economy of the new state in the hands of Muslims (Alexandris, 1992:106-107). Consequently, many professions, both in the private and public sector, were "closed off" for the Christians, whilst in extreme cases they were forced to leave their businesses and country because they faced various kinds of threats (Anastasiadou & Dymon; 2007:39, Alexandris, 1992:106).

[14] It is worth mentioning that the Turkish delegation at the Lausanne treaty's sessions did not accept the term "minority", because if they did it would be like accepting the existence of various ethnic communities and thus the "dream" of establishing a homogenous nation-state could be never fulfilled (Komsuoglu-Birsen, 2009:408).

Nonetheless, this policy did not prove hard enough to cause irremediable traumas to the Greek-Orthodox of Constantinople. However, it was the following decades that marked the ominous fate of the Greek-Orthodox community. While to begin with, İsmet İnönü, the president of Turkey, kept a neutral position towards World War II (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:40) the single-party government of Turkey recruited men from the non-Muslim minorities aged between 22-44 in 1941, an incident known as the "Yirmi Kur'a İhtiyatlar Olayı" (Incidence of Reserves). Since the state did not trust the reluctant *gâvur* (infidel), who did not give into the Turkification policy, it did not provide them with weapons; instead they were placed on the fringe of the Turkish army. More specifically, they were placed in labour battalions working in road construction, just like they had been during World War I (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:41). During that same period, the non-Muslim minorities became once again the target of Turkish policy. In November 1942 they were burdened with the capital tax (*varlık vergisi*) launched by the government in an attempt to get out of the economic impasse it had fallen into. In many cases the tax was too overwhelming for the non-Muslim minorities to afford it and consequently when their members could not pay the required amount or paid part of it, they were deported in Aşkale (Erzurum, Theodosiopolis in Greek) and later in Sivrihisar in order to be used in road construction (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:42; Komsuoglu-Birsen, 2009:411-412). Needless to say that this strict, discriminating measure left many Greeks, Armenians and Jews financially devastated, who fled Constantinople. Especially for the Greek-Orthodox the prospect of settling in Greece was far from safe as the country was under German occupation and later after the liberation, a civil war was to break out (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:42).

As Anastasiadou and Dumont claim that despite the fact that the actions taken against the non-Muslim minorities had stigmatized the collective memory of the Greek-Orthodox minority, they did not open "unhealed wounds", since they felt that only part of these hostilities was directed at them and they were not the sole target of. The "real" wound opened when finally the Greek-Orthodox minority became in fact the primary target of Turkish animosity. On September 6, 1955, after some rumours had circulated in Turkey stating that a bomb exploded in the house of Mustafa Kemal in Thessaloniki the day before, an unprecedented pogrom was

launched (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:43). On the night of September 6-7, 1955, a crowd of people from Constantinople and Anatolia attacked and destroyed everything on Pera (*Beyoğlu*) street. It is noteworthy that most of the shops in the area belonged to the Greek-Orthodox. Moreover, it is estimated that the riots were motivated by the government, since the brutalities took place under the watchful eye of the Turkish police, which did not make any effort to stop them. According to Anastasiadou and Dumont the tragic toll was approximately as follow: 1,004 houses, 4,348 shops, 27 drugstores, 110 restaurants, 73 churches and 26 schools were completely destroyed. The riots of September 1955 (*Septemvriana*) made some Greek-Orthodox leave the country, but certainly not as many as one would expect in proportion to the size of the disaster (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:43-44; Komsuoglu-Birsen, 2009:412).

Despite the above hostilities against the non-Muslim minorities in general and the Greek-Orthodox community in particular, the deportations of 1964 were one of the cruelest violations of the Lausanne Treaty. The concern of the Turkish government for a potential reunification of Greece with Cyprus, which had obtained its independence from the British Empire in 1960, was to be seen in the abolishment of the agreement made in 1930 according to which the Greek nationals resided legally in Constantinople under the status of *établis.* Approximately 10,000 Greek citizens were forced to leave Turkey. However, the number was much larger since they fled with their family members, who had the Turkish citizenship (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:44-45). The circumstances under which they had to depart brought once more to light how Turkey had become a hostile place for them. They were asked to leave within a few days taking nothing but a small bag only with the bare necessities with them. In addition to this, there were many, who despite being Turkish citizens left since the country's climate of insecurity became suffocating[15] (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:45).

Considering the long-suffering course of the Greek-Orthodox of Constantinople, the community nowadays feels the need to hope for an auspicious future. A hope based, on the one hand, on the improved relations between Greece

[15] More details about the riots of September 1955 and the deportations of 1964 will be discussed below.

and Turkey since the big earthquake that hit the neigbouring country in 1999[16] and on the other hand in the latter's acceptance as a candidate for the European Union in December 1999. Nevertheless, this candidacy requires reforms in fields that "hurt" the Turkish Republic, since any change would create uncertainty and in reality would entail the dismantling of the Kemalist political system, namely a self-abolition of the current power structure and re-establishment of the state. These indispensable reforms for its admission as a state-member of the EU focus on human rights and the emergence of minorities in autonomous entities. Such reforms would be quite positive for Turkey, which in no way seeks to return to its Ottoman past. The other measures aim for restricting the Turkish military's role in strategy matters and abrogating its political role (Giallouridis & Langidis, 2010:28-29). Evidently, the road towards a European integration of Turkey is difficult and long and the Greek-Orthodox seem to be aware of it.

[16] The earthquake of August 17, 1999 that struck Nicomedia (Izmit) resulted in thousands of people losing their lives. The Greece sent substantial aid and then followed a period of thaw in Greek-Turkish relations (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:306).

2. From History to Cinema: identities and nationalism

In the previous chapter we discussed, among other things, the milestone dates for the declining course of the Greek-Orthodox in Constantinople. What is more, the decades of the '50s and '60s became the beginning of the end for the community, since the pogrom of 1955, as well as the displacement of 1964 caused irreparable emotional and material damages that stigmatized eternally the community's identity. In the present chapter the events of these decades are going to be analysed as viewed through the cinematographic lens of the movies *Pains of Autumn (Pliges tou Fthinoporou)* by Turkish director Tomris Giritlioğlu and the by Tassos Boulmetis autobiographical film *A touch of Spice (Politiki Kouzina)*. These films were selected because both address two important historical periods for the Greek-Orthodox community and also because they are seen the first one from the Turkish perspective and the second one from a Greek-Orthodox director.

2.1 The *Septemvriana* (1955) as depicted in the movie *Pains of Autumn*

Let us begin our approach of the *Septemvriana,* as illustrated in the Turkish movie *Pains of Autumn.* The film is a Turkish production of 2009, with a large part of the material based on the homonymous book written by Yılmaz Karakoyunlu. The *Pains of Autumn* is a historical drama that combines a fateful and tragic love between a Greek-Orthodox prostitute (Elena) and a moderate Turkish nationalist student (Behçet) during the days of unrest. Although the facts are presented from the Turkish perspective and therefore may be expected to have inaccuracies or even attempts to conceal details of a story taboo for the standards of Turkey, the movie approaches the historical facts with objectivity. The director said in interviews, "I dealt with the past to show what should be the future of Turkey", while the screenwriter and editor of the Armenian newspaper *Agos* said, "This film couldn't have been made ten years ago" (Barka, 2009; Today's Zaman, 2009).

However, in order for the reader to understand the *Septemvriana*, I will start with a presentation of the events that led to this outbreak. There are various scientific perspectives regarding the causes for the pogrom on September 6-7,

1955. Some believe that the riots were the direct result of the strained atmosphere between Greece and Turkey because of the island of Cyprus. Rumours of an impending attack by Greek-Cypriots against the Turkish minority that lived on the island sparked the riots in Constantinople. On hearing these news, according to Dilek Güven, the nationalist newspaper *Hürriyet* stressed in one of its articles that, "Here in Constantinople plenty of Greeks live whom we could attack" (Giouven, 2006:13). Others regard the events of September 1955 as an impulsive outbreak of an angry mob following the news of *Istanbul Ekspres* paper, according to which on September 6th the Turkish consulate, and the alleged[17] parental home of Mustafa Kemal had been bombed. What is more, there are also those who attribute the events to the feeling of inferiority that gripped the Muslims due to the non-Muslims and especially the Greek-Orthodox minority's economic supremacy. Indeed, in the trial conducted in Yassıada in 1960-1961 concerning the events of September 1955, the Court condemned the pogrom of 1955 as a crime against non-Muslim properties rather than human lives (Giouven, 2006:13; Vryonis, 2007:68).

In any case, the *Septemvriana* should not be perceived merely as a spontaneous or isolated incident unrelated to the Turkish state policy, as Turkey has claimed on various occasions. On the contrary, it was completely interwoven with the county's nationalist policy, as the movie illustrates, and therefore the roots of the problem lay in the first decades of the Kemalist nationalism, when the assimilation policy of the "others" began to be applied openly and identity was based on whether someone was of Turkish ethnicity or not (Giouven, 2006:13, 162). The Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) of Mustafa Kemal having the taken advantage of the one-party regime exercised a fairly restrictive policy against the non-Muslim populations, who despite being considered legally equal to other Muslims, suffered under various kinds of restrictions. Thus, constraints were imposed on both the professional activities of non-Muslims, as well as in other fields such as education and social life, where they were forced to speak in public only Turkish. The latter was known as the *Vatandaş Türkçe konuş* (*Citizen speak Turkish*) movement (Giouven, 2006). While the movie makes no reference to the

[17] The word-notion is attributed to Spyros Vryonis in his book *The mechanism of Catastrophe* (Vryonis, 2007:69).

policy of the CHP, I believe the above imformation is of great importance in order to illustrate that there was almost no difference between the CHP and Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti).

The insertion of the multiparty system with the establishment of the Democratic Party (DP) in 1945, led by Adnan Menderes, inaugurated a short-lived period of "breath of fresh air" for the non-Muslim minorities promising more freedoms and tolerance towards non-Muslims. Not surprisingly the CHP changed its stance toward minorities during that period. Many restrictions were lifted and the Greek Patriarch could now take part in the administrative affairs of the Greek-Orthodox community. The change of the CHP's attitude towards minorities came as no surprise, since the emergence of the Democratic Party in politics, would lead the CHP to lose potential votes. Nevertheless, the CHP's efforts could not reverse the already created atmosphere of discomfort and the DP came out victorious both in the elections of 1950 and 1954 (Giouven, 2006:227-230,245).

The DP's promises were fulfilled as further favourable measures in the field of education were taken. The minority schools acquired their own organizations to resolve their issues. The goodwill between Greece and Turkey, partly due to the cooperation of the two countries as members of NATO[18], was illustrated also in education (Giouven, 2006:242-243). Both countries decided to maintain and supply their own schools with curricula and sending their own teachers in minority schools to the neighbouring country. What is more, the relations between the Turkish leadership and the Patriarchate became more cordial than ever[19]. The Turkish press, on the other hand, was until 1955 quite sparing in its annotation regarding minorities (Giouven, 2006:243-244, 247; Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007).

Nonetheless, it was quickly proven that the DP was equally close to the nationalist ideology of the CHP. Hence, even though in the early years of its power the country experienced an economic recovery and the government's relations with the minorities had been ironed out, in the late 50's the DP faced again a declining economy and therefore an increasingly disgruntled public of intellectuals and

[18] Both of them became members of NATO in 1951.

[19] For the first time in the history of Turkey the Prime Minister of the country visited the Ecumenical Patriarch, Athenagoras I in Phanar after the latter's visit in Ankara.

politically active groups (Giouven, 2006:248, 15). Needless to say that the government never fulfilled its electoral promises. As a result, the non-Muslims found themselves once again on the sidelines of the Turkish state. The capital tax was actually never returned, at least not to the extent it was expected, the reserve officers did not have the right to occupy strategic positions, whilst the minority communities had been unable to obtain permission from the government to conduct elections and establish community councils (Giouven, 2006:249-252).

Being in such a difficult position, Menderes attempted to direct the people's attention towards the Cyprus conflict. The strong interest of Turkey regarding Cyprus was greatly influenced by Britain. The film *Pains of Autumn* describes the turmoil that prevailed a few days before the *Septemvriana.* However, as Güven describes (2006), few years ago the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Necmeddin Sadak, declared:

> Sirs, there is no Cyprus question. I have said it before, when I was answering to questions by representatives of the Press. There is no Cyprus question, because this island is under the sovereignty and government of Great Britain. We know that England has not the slightest intention of transferring its rights over the island to another force and it has never shown any such intention (translation made by the author) (p. 304).

As illustrated, until the early '50s Turkey's position regarding Cyprus was neutral. For Turkey it was an issue to be handled between Greece and Great Britain and the Turkish state had no reason to risk the good relations with Greece that had been established in the '30s. Yet, Greece's claim to unite with Cyprus and especially the Greek Prime Minister's, Alexandros Papagos, intention in 1945 to raise the issue before the UN, were making Great Britain feel like it was losing ground. In order to reinforce its vulnerable position and avoid the charge of colonialism, the British persuaded Turkey to change its passive role and follow a harsher tactic regarding the issue (Giouven, 2006:304-306, 310).

In the first scenes of the film we witness Turkey's newly adopted passionate position, as depicted when the protagonist, Behçet, a nationalist student, attends a gathering of the nationalist group "Cyprus is Turkish" (Kıbrıs Türktür Cemiyeti) with a leftist friend of his, Suat. In the film we can see the course of KTC and its

connection with the government unfold. Established in the summer of 1954 it became the main "executive body" of the Menderes government. Among the leading members of the committee was the highly respected by the Prime Minister Hikmet Bil, Hürriyet's editor. With financial assistance stemming from the government and the reports of Hürriyet, which raised the Cyprus question to a national issue, the KTC strengthened its position by annexing more and more members, who originated from the opposition (Giouven, 2006:108-111). Evidently, Menderes by rallying politicians, the Press and the majority of the Turkish population managed to exercise significant influence at all levels of Turkish society and consequently could implement the policy he desired. This fact, according to Vryonis, is the key to those who argue, as it happens in the film, that after the first outbreak of demonstrations the situation got out of control. Vryonis mentions that it was a carefully planned political course and stresses that there is ample evidence proving that the anarchy could have been suppressed at any time (Vryonis, 2007:108-109). He brings as an example the case of the Patriarchate and the Greek consulate, which were being guarded by military forces and did not face any problems in managing the rebel mob. He also referred to the inaction of the police, which watched the non-Muslims' and mostly Greeks' property be vandalized without interfering until the declaration of martial law that ordered the police and army to intervene (Vryonis, 2007:109).

What is more, the movie reveals the corruption in the political circles. Government officials were aware of what was going to happen and in preparation for the events fortified themselves with equipment (in the movie). They also organized the murder of a newspaper director (Omer Saruhan), a moderate supporter and sceptic of the KTC, who was influencing Menderes.

The communists were also a group closely watched by the secret police. In the film there are scenes that reveal the fury of the nationalists and the government's actions against them. Specifically, the future father in law of the protagonist and right-wing extremist, Kenan Bey, "forces" Behçcet to betray the leftists he knew. Among them was also his brotherly friend, Suat. The highlight of that action is portrayed in the scene of Suat's assassination by members of the KTC, who beat him to death in front of Behçet. It is noteworthy mentioning that a couple of days

after the riots the government blamed Communists for the events, an explanation which did not however convince the masses[20], since there were only a few communists in Turkey and thus impossible for them to organize a rebellion of that scale (Giouven, 2006:104-105).

Despite the fact that the government's and consequently the organizations', like KTC, target was Greece and the Greek-Cypriots, the situation soon began to affect exclusively the Greek-Orthodox community. The film presents this growing hostility through anti-Greek demonstrations a few days before the *Septemvriana* took place. Protesters used slogans like "Kıbrıs Türktür, Türk kalacak" (Cyprus is Turkish and will remain Turkish) and "Rumlar gidecek bu iş bitecek" (*Out with the Greek-Orthodox*) (Giritlioglu, 2009). The event that triggered the horrific events of September 1955 was the news that a bomb had exploded in the house of Mustafa Kemal in Thessaloniki[21]. Even though Greeks were accused of this bombing incident, it was later revealed that it was a well organized act by the Turkish government[22]. The film does not shy away from the truth, as it is depicted in the scene where Kenan Bey in a conversation with a like-minded confessed the organized bombing of the Turkish consulate in Thessaloniki.

What is more, the overnight marking of -mainly Greek- shops and houses with red paint before the events took place, as depicted in the film, was done in order to protect Muslim properties from vandalism. The members of the KTC had been supplied by authorities with lists containing addresses of Greek houses and shops in order to identify the buildings and destroy them[23]. However, in his testimony Donios Dokdakis said that the same procedure had been repeated two weeks prior

[20] A few weeks later the Turkish government withdrew this argument.

[21] The state radio broadcasted the news at 1pm, while the newspaper *Istanbul Ekspres,* which circulated at 4pm of the same day, had published a photograph of the house of Atatürk in Thessaloniki after the explosion of the bomb. Vryonis in his book explains that the photograph had been tampered with (Giouven, 2006:31, Vryonis, 2007:146).

[22] From the trials of Yassıada in 1960 it resulted that the explosives were sent from Ankara to Thessaloniki on September 3. According to Vryonis, the preparation of this mission was a time consuming process, a fact that proves that the incident that was to trigger the pogrom had been organized long before. Thus, he rejects the statement of Hikmet Bil, who claimed that the pogrom was designed the evening of September 5th (Vryonis, 2007:145-146).

[23] The suspicion of the Turkish state towards the non-Muslim minorities stems from a report by the French consulate, according to which during the World War II information for the non-Muslims was recorded so that in case of any turbulence the authorities could locate and exterminate them (Giouven, 2006:35).

to the pogrom (Giouven, 2006: 34-35). In the last fifteen minutes of the film we see how the events on the 6th and 7th September on the Street of Pera unfolded. At this point it is worth noting that the events had several outbreak centers, which erupted simultaneously and spread out to more remote areas, for example to the Asian side[24]. As it is vividly depicted in the movie, organized groups consisting of 30-50 people, including Muslims who had been transferred under the care of the government from Anatolia and Thrace, carrying Turkish flags, crowbars, shovels, gasoline and other types of tools of destruction broke firstly the shop windows and then destroyed the merchandise. Even though they were instructed not to engage in physical violence or steal anything from the stores both[25] occurred in reality and is clearly to be seen on screen. Streets filled with discarded commodities and a crowd verging on hysteria pillaging the broken stores was only one of the many scenes described by director Tomris Giritlioğlu (Vryonis, 2007:156-157; Alexandris, 1992:257). In addition, the female protagonist, Elena, is brutally abused by the most hardcore ethnicist of the movie. In fact, over thirty Greek-Orthodox were killed, while many girls and women were raped. On the other hand, there were a few cases of Muslims who protected Christian neighbours or friends from attacks by convincing the mob that there were no Greek-Orthodox where they were going to attack (Vryonis, 2007:157-158).

The same fate was also reserved for many churches and cemeteries of the community. Approximately seventy churches were burned and many cemeteries desecrated. Specifically, in the Balıklı and Sisli cemeteries many tombs were despoiled, among which were the tombs that belonged to Ecumenical Patriarchs, while in the cemetery of Sisli they opened the tomb of Nicholaos Iliaskos[26], who had died a month ago, and stabbed his corpse (Vryonis, 2007:167, Giouven, 2006:40). Nonetheless, the film focuses on the atrocities that occurred exclusively on Istiklal Street (Pera) and concentrates upon the anti-Greek character they had. It should

[24] Even though the *Pains of Autumn* focuses on the riots based in Istanbul and specifically in Pera Street, alike events took also place in Smyrna and Ankara.

[25] The slogan that sounded throughout the vandalisms was "Evvela Mal, Sonra Can" ("First your properties, then your lives") (Vryonis, 2007:157).

[26] Nicholaos Iliaskos was the uncle of the governor of the National Bank of Greece (Giouven, 2006:40).

however be noted that not only Greeks, but all non-Muslims, namely Armenians and Jews, came to harm.

Overall, the film mostly received positive reviews from both progressive and conservative journalists and it was a great success for the Turkish box offices. According to film producer Fatih Ömeroğlu, the shooting of the film was difficult because the Turkish public knew little about the events of 1955. Nevertheless, he argued that the public has accepted the facts stressing that "Turkey is changing very quickly. Faster than Europe. The Turkish public longs to know its story without bias" (Barka, 2009). What is more, the Turkish journalist Uğur Vardan in a publication in the newspaper *Radikal* says, "There is much cacophony for which the Turkish state has to apologize. *Pains of Autumn* opens the door" (translation made by the author) (Vardan, 2009). On the other hand, there are negative reviews of the film such as Ali Murat Güven's, who characterized the film as masochistic and claims that it was a subjective glance that aimed to present Turkey as a fascist country like Germany of 1930. He blamed Tomris Giritlioğlu for her lefttist ideas that she strongly expressed in the movie, in which the Turkish nationalists were presented as the worst of all (Giouven, 2009).

To conclude, *Pains of Autumn* seems to be a public apology for the *Septemvriana*. As clearly stated in the film, the events of September was not an impulse of the Turkish people, but a well-staged "business" of the Turkish government within the context of the nationalist policy to create a homogenous state. The Turkish people simply became the executive body-victim of this policy and scapegoat the Greek-Orthodox community.

2.1.2 In the wake of the *Septemvriana*

According to a report from the American consulate the aim of the *Septemvriana* was to decimate economically and morally the Greek-Orthodox community causing, thus, its fragmentation. Evidently, it was achieved to a great extent. Despite the Turkish government's compensations, scant as they were, most of the merchants who saw their property be ravaged those days, failed to recover again. However, the principal blow to the community concerned the psychological impact. The

atrocities of 1955 had made it more than clear to the Greek-Orthodox that they would never be counted as equal to Turkish citizens (Giouven, 2006:267,280; Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:44). The trauma the Greek-Orthodox' identity suffered is depicted in a written report by Patriarch Athenagoras to Menderes. In this text quoted by Vryonis (2007), among others, Athenagoras says:

> In fact, the very foundations of a civilization, which is a heritage of centuries and property of all mankind, was attacked. The sacrosanct of our religion has been desecrated […] Damages were caused to school buildings and the teachers suffered great losses. Worst than the damaging of the buildings is that it was an affront to the noble concept of learning and culture […] After the despicable attack on the foundations of their belief, their religion and honour, the sacrosanct family life and other gifts of prosperity, the feeling of being free citizens has been shaken to its foundation. Seeing that they are suddenly deprived of all protection, they live today in uncertainty, with concern weighting on their soul (translation made by the author) (pp. 249-250).

Given the lack of any trust towards the Turkish state, the Greek-Orthodox found themselves in a dilemma of whether to leave their homeland or stay. It is true that after the events, the migration wave that was created was not proportionate to the violence. Their conscience, which stated that they are "more indigenous than the Turks", to quote Anastasiadou-Dumont, seems to have been more powerful than any brutality (Giouven, 2006:272; Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:44). The role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was crucial in their decision of whether they would stay or leave. Fearing a mass exodus of the Greek-Orthodox from the country, which would automatically lead to the weakening of the Patriarchate and therefore to its possible expulsion out of the county, the Greek Patriarch tried in every way to convince the community members to remain. In this struggle both the Greek consulate of Istanbul and the Greek government contributed. The latter acknowledged the importance of the community's existence in Istanbul and hence raised bureaucratic difficulties for applicants wishing to settle in Greece (Giouven, 2006:273-274; Sarioglou, 2004:177). In addition to this, there were also other factors that forced them to stay. Since they were financially ruined, they firstly tried to become again economically stable. The other reason concerns

the government, which in order to avoid a massive transfer of funds of those who were to move out of Turkey, refused to issue passports prohibiting them essentially from leaving the country. In spite of the above obstacles, the applications for issuing visa with Great Britain and the USA as destinations increased and one year after the anti-Greek riots approximately 5,000 Greek-Orthodox, according to Guven, fled to Greece, the USA, Canada and Australia (Giouven, 2006:274-278; Alexandris, 1992:270).

Regarding the community members who decided to stay, they accepted more and more psychological pressure in every aspect of their daily life. The minority schools were placed under strict surveillance, since the Turkish authorities did not approve of the text books used, while the Greek directors were marginalized, with Turkish deputy directors, a position restored by the state in order for the minority education to be completely scrutinized, having the final say. Moreover, the community's press was targeted by the Turkish government. Newspapers, which used to issue about 10,000 copies daily before the *Septemvriana*, were now limited to 3,000-4,000 copies after the riots. These papers included also those issued by the Patriarchate (Sarioglou, 2004:175,180). Evidently, the increasing intolerance towards the Greek-Orthodox affected the religious life as well. Athenagoras tried in vain to establish good relations with the authorities. On the contrary, he had to face rumours concerning the potential transfer of the Patriarchate to Mount Athos and he could not obtain permission from the Turkish government to renovate the Patriarchate and other institutions of the community. This hostile attitude towards Orthodoxy emanated from the growing suspicion on Turkey's part, unfounded as it was, that the Phanar was involved in politics. Thus the Turkish press brought back to the forefront, in 1958, Papa Eftim[27] who harshly accused the Phanar and especially the Patriarch Athenagoras of having been involved in anti-Turkish actions (Alexandris, 1992: 268,271).

Certainly, the pogrom of 1955 had been the beginning of the end for the Greek-Orthodox community in Turkey. So far they had managed to heal the wounds

[27] Papa Eftim was the leader of the Turkish Orthodox Church, independent of the Patriarchate, which he founded with the support of Ankara during the period 1919-1922. Papa Eftim managed to convert part of the Orthodox, Turkish-speaking population of Cappadocia, but after 1922 the organization declined and its role was mainly parasitic against the Patriarchate (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:161-163).

of the past and continue to live in a multicultural society, but preserving their identity. The years that followed somehow vindicated those who decided to leave after the riots. The final blow to the Greek-Orthodox comes with the events of 1964 which will be discussed below (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007).

2.2 The events of '64 as depicted in the movie *A Touch of Spice*

In the period between 1955 and 1964 relations between the two countries were like balancing on a tightrope. The various immigration waves of the Greek-Orthodox, the increasing insecurity the community felt and the intensified measures against it, such as the requirement to speak only Turkish, were products of the Greek-Turkish relations associated with Cyprus. Only in 1959 was there an improvement of relations between the two countries, when the independent state of Cyprus was established and the Zurich and London agreements were signed (February, 1959), which inter alia guaranteed the rights of the Turkish minority in Cyprus (Alexandris, 1992). However, shortly after the agreements were characterized as unsustainable by the Cyprus government and Makarios proposed amendments. In response to Makarios' proposals for amendments, Turkey called for the partition of the island. Since the two sides failed to come to any compromise, the signed agreements collapsed in 1963 when armed clashes erupted on the island between Turkish and Greek troops (Alexandris, 1992:280). Once again the victims of those disagreements were the Greek-Orthodox of Constantinople who were caught like hostages between the two sides of the Greco-Turkish conflict. Turkey accused the Greek government of supporting Makarios and the Greeks in Constantinople of becoming richer in Turkey in order to finance the war of the Greek-Cypriots on the island abrogated the 1930 agreement on March 1964. As part of that accord the permanent residence of Greek nationals in the city that had settled there before 1918 was accepted (Alexandris, 1992:280-281; Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:44).

In early 1964 the lists of deportees announced by the Turkish press included only a few families which, according to Turkish authorities, were involved in anti-Turkish activities. Yet, the list of deportees' names multiplied and hence the massive character of the expulsions was soon revealed. Approximately, 10,000

people with Greek citizenship were forced to leave the city taking with them, as expected, the members of their family who held the Turkish nationality. Among the "traitors", as Anastasiadou and Dumont stress, were also elderly people who, despite the opposition of the Greek government, were not excluded from deportation (Alexandris, 1992:281-282; Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:45).

In the movie *A Touch of Spice*, which is based on the expulsions of '64, the conditions that led to the expulsion are not clearly explained. The movie is an oral narrative of the central hero, Fanis, who recounts the story and adventures of his family during the deportations of '64 and their installation in Greece. Thus the film is structured by memories, while historical details are left implicit to be filled by the individual viewers. The fact that Fanis does not include in his narration details of the political state of affairs has to do with what Paul Thompson claims about memory, which is that the procedure of memory depends not only on the individual comprehension but also on interests (Thompson, 2008:172). In the movie, Fanis as a child was not interested in or was not able to understand what was "cooked" in politics and that is why he does not mention the political matters in detail. On the contrary, the narrator puts emphasis on the events that marked his own and his family's life. The violent removal from the homeland and beloved ones (Fanis' grandfather and his Turkish friend, Saime) becomes for Fanis a trauma. He says:

> I fear of people who wear uniforms [...] but most of all I am afraid of custom employees. The day we were leaving *Poli,* people who wore uniforms injured with chalk the little luggage we had with us. That sign resembled every Constantinopolitan's trauma that came to Athens (translation made by the author) (Boulmetis, 2003).

Evidently, the fear of people who wear uniforms and especially customs employees stems from the traumatic experience that the hero had when they were expelled. According to Anne Whitehead "the "memory" of trauma is not subject to the usual narrative or verbal mechanisms of recall, but is instead organized as bodily sensations, behavioural re-enactments, nightmares, and flashbacks" (Whitehead, 2009:115). Thus, it was the past similar traumatic situations that Fanis' grandfather experienced (1922, 1955), which caused the pain on his back every time that the

relations between Greece and Turkey deteriorated. Furthermore, after such incidents he used to send X-rays to his nephew (Emilios), who was a captain and travelled a lot, in order to show them to doctors. As Emilios hints later in the film, with that symbolic act the grandfather attempted to stress his concern about a possible future displacement from "his" city and how the political events hurt him. The same pain is "inherited" by Fanis, who feels it every time that a traumatic experience comes to the surface. It is the scene of the movie where the hero and the Turkish husband of Saime (Mustafa) have a conversation in a bath-house. Fanis feels the back pain when Mustafa says that they had not to leave Constantinople. However, the hero remembers well that they did not leave their homeland; instead, they were driven out.

While the movie makes a brief reference to the process of deportations, I believe it is important to include some historical sources in order to illustrate the humiliation suffered by the community members. First of all, a series of economic measures were taken to ensure that the Greek-Orthodox could not liquidate their property, which was seized by the competent fiscal authorities. Moreover, banks were not allowed to approve loans for businesses owned by the Greek-Orthodox of either Greek or Turkish nationality. What is more, the conditions under which deportations took place were even more humiliating. Anastasiadou and Dumont argue that according to testimonies, people had only a few days to leave and furthermore, they were not allowed to take anything but a small bag containing only the bare essentials (cf.Alexandris, 1992:284; Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:45). Furthermore, they could also carry with them an amount of money, which did not exceed 200TL and were forced to sign a written statement, whose content they were not aware of. By signing this document, they actually admitted that a) they traded currency illegally, b) they were members of the "Hellenic Union of Istanbul" that had been accused of exercising an anti-Turkish policy, c) they had strengthened financially the "Greek terrorists of Cyprus" and finally d) they left the country voluntarily (Alexandris, 1992:284).

To come back to the movie, the whole plot is closely related to the *Politiki* cuisine. As in Greek the word *Politiki,* depending where the word is stressed, may refer to someone who originates from Constantinople or to someone practising

politics, the same holds true in the movie, where the word *Politiki* holds a twofold meaning. To justify this notion, the hero says "The *Politiki* cuisine is also Political, because it is made by people who left their meal half way, somewhere else" (translation made by the author) (Boulmetis, 2003). Even the film itself, which is an oral narrative, consists of flashbacks and is structured in three parts related to cooking; "appetizers" (*mezedes*), "main dishes" and "desserts".

In the first part of the film, after some sequences unfolding in the present, the hero reminisces over his childhood life in Constantinople in 1959. Among his first memories is the importance and use of spices, not so much as the gustatory result they bring forth, which of course is of great importance, but mainly as a means of defining one's feelings. Thus, Fanis' grandfather used to say that cinnamon "brings people together, makes them look each other in the eyes", whilst "if a diplomat smells of garlic things are not going well" (translation made by the author) (Boulmetis, 2003). The hero, who is taught his first astronomy and geography lessons from his grandfather (Mr. Vasilis) at his grocery store's loft, is also initiated in this philosophy. These lessons are always conducted with the help of spices.

What is more, the hero recalls the regular Sunday gatherings of all his relatives at his family home and the culinary feast in which they ended. In those Sunday gatherings everyone helped, while the women competed with each other in order to prove who has the better cooking skills. Such gatherings also took place during matchmakings, which were to be successful only if the candidate bride had been initiated into the secrets of the Constantinopolitan cuisine, or also during relatives' arrivals, as is shown in the cases, when the family was waiting for the grandfather to come from Constantinople. The hero's memories from these gatherings are related to Connerton's theory about performative or social-habit memory. According to Connerton commemorative ceremonies and rituals are the practices that transmit cultural memory from one generation to another and he stresses that such practices are necessary to preserve the group memory. He characteristically says "All rituals are characterized by the bodily performance of set postures, gestures and movements, which are highly formalized, easily predictable, and readily repeatable", stressing in that way that this kind of memory is mainly related to the body (Whitehead, 2009:133). In our case the gatherings, that took place not only on

Sundays but also at important moments in the lives of the heroes, become a ritual practice through which the community members maintain their cultural coherence. Within this "tradition" the role of each member is defined, specifying in this way the community's identity. Thus, while cooking is considered a woman's role, when it becomes known to the wider family that Fanis cooks and cooks well, instead of playing with the other boys his age, a question arises about his gender identity (Dermentzopoulos, 2010:180-181).

As far as the relations between the two nationalities are concerned, they are illustrated by the close friendship of the hero with Saime, the daughter of his mother's best friend. The two children spend hours playing together and when Fanis and his family leave to go to Greece, Saime is at the railway station to bid him farewell. Another fact indicative of the relations between the two nationalities is the rapport between Fanis' grandfather and the Turkish diplomat, Osman Bey, who holds the elderly man in high esteem, since he knows how to keep the balance[28]. For the same reason he has also earned the love of Mustafa, who characteristically says "I respected him very much. His opinions were always valued. And his knowledge on matters of diplomacy made a great impression on me" (translation made by the author) (Boulmetis, 2003).

Few days before their deportation, the hero experiences another incident that stigmatizes his memory and that is the sound of the doorbell while the family is dining. Turkish police officers inform his father (Savvas Iakovidis), a Greek national, that his resident permit can not be renewed and he has to leave the city within a week. Since then, the sound of a doorbell or the phone ringing has interrupted each significant meal in the life of the hero (his grandfather arrival that never came to passing or the arrival of Mustafa after Fanis had asked Saime to stay together), always reminding him of the first sound that delivered the news for their deportation. Until the time of their exile, Constantinople had been the place where the hero was born and spent his childhood. The first individual memories, which according to Halbwachs operate under a collective memory, were created there.

[28] When he asked Osman's son, Mustafa, what he will be when he grows up, father and son responded simultaneously "a military man" and "doctor" respectively. Then Mr. Vasilis said "Both of them are good. But I think that when Mustafa grows up he will be a military doctor", and so it happened (translation made by the author) (Boulmetis, 2003).

Halbwachs points out that collective and individual memory are not two separate things; on the contrary they complement each other. Even from our early age we are not alone and become part of various groups (familial, religious, political, social etc) and identify our way of thinking with the common mentality of each group (Thompson, 2008:173; Whitehead, 2009:126). Thus, when Fanis' family later resides in Athens, Constantinople acquires even greater value and is idealized in their collective memory.

The narrator's first traumatic experience in 1964 is accompanied by the breakdown of his identity; "The Turks sent us away for being Greeks and the Greeks received us as Turks" (translation made by the author)(Boulmetis, 2003). The hero experiences this rejection of his identity from all the main institutions in Greece, namely the church ("Patisia has been filled with Turks"), the school and police ("How long has it been since your family came from Turkey?"), which stress the importance of Fanis' adaptation to the Greek reality and him becoming a patriot (translation made by the author) (Boulmetis, 2003). However, despite all this, the hero refuses to adapt to his new circumstances and instead he continues keeping alive his nostalgia for the homeland through cooking, smells and cards he receives from and sends to Saime. The kitchen becomes a cultural space that connects the narrator with the place of memory and the beloved people he left behind, while dinner gatherings of all the relatives serve, among other things, as a means of preserving the community's identity. According to the hero, this identity includes, apart from a certain mentality, also biological and aesthetical dimensions (Dermentzopoulos, 2010:181-182). Thus, the narrator since the beginning of the film, while describing his grandfather's friends, talks about a distinct tribe:

> Their Byzantine origin makes them differ from the other Greeks not only historically but also biologically. First of all, they are magnetized. It is as if there is a hidden compass in their brain which over every question of geography redefines their identity. Who they are, where they come from and where they are going (translation made by the author) (Boulmetis, 2003).

This peculiarity is said to be related to their diet. While for most people food is related to taste and smell for them it has to do both with hearing and vision, using in this way all their senses. Hence, there are scenes in the movie, where we can see them choosing raw materials by using all the senses. Even Fanis' uncle Emilios, the cosmopolitan captain who has travelled all over the world, when he returns from his travels he talks of his experiences always using cooking as a point of reference. Thus, he describes how women in different parts of the world cut onions and the fact that one can understand what every woman cooks by the way she moves.

Despite the resistance of little Fanis to be integrated into Greek society, his parents manage to adapt to the new circumstances. Fanis' father follows faithfully the schoolteacher's advice that Fanis is not to read in the kitchen and the suggestions of the police officer, who stresses the necessity for the child to develop a national consciousness and become a patriot. These few sequences illustrate how the state "exploits" its key institutions in order to promote a particular model of life to be adopted by every citizen for the purpose of creating an overarching national identity (Borneman, 1997:97). The fact that Fanis turns "Kolokotronis" into a verb is a serious cause for concern for the schoolteacher and she emphasizes how important it is for the hero to know and recognize the Greek heroes. Nevertheless, their assimilation does not prevent them from maintaining their identity, traditions and memory within their home. The fact that Greeks treat them like Turks, as described above, causes bitterness increasing thus their nostalgia for Constantinople ("Greece was beautiful when we dreamt of it in Constantinople, more beautiful than what we found here") (translation made by the author) (Boulmetis, 2003).

The transfer of the hero's grandfather to the hospital "forces" him to return to the place and time of his childhood. There, he encounters the images of his early life, Saime and his grandfather's grocery store, in which he does not dare enter the first time. However, he finally manages to "fully reconcile with the flight and separation, having completely mourned this situation", as characteristically the Constantinopolitan director of the film Tassos Boulmetis says, who had the same experiences as the hero did (translation made by the author) (Karouzakis, 2012). Being now an adult, Fanis understands why his grandfather did not intend to leave

Constantinople. In his return trip to Constantinople Fanis is trying to find not only the places but also the smells in the attic, namely everything that built his individual memory and identity. As Dermentzopoulos points out, the narrator is not looking for a lost homeland; instead he tries to redefine this homeland in the present through the collective memory. The hero's conscious decision to stay in Constantinople permanently, despite having lost the people he loves that connected him to this place, comes from his reconciliation with the past. Thus, the fears that kept him away from Constantinople (when Saime asks him why he did not come back, he replied "Because I was afraid of the moment I would leave") belong to the past (translation made by the author) (Dermentzopoulos, 2010:174,179).

To conclude, *A Touch of Spice* is a Greek-Turkish co-production of 2003, directed by Tassos Boulmetis. It is an oral narrative recounted by the main character, Fanis, who narrates the story of his family and consequently of the Greek-Orthodox community, which were persecuted from Constantinople and came to Greece. The director himself is a Greek-Orthodox, born in Constantinople (Kadıköy, Chalkidona in Greek) in 1957 and his family was among those who were deported in 1964. *A touch of Spice* is a semiautobiographical story, closely related to Boulmetis' own real life-story.

The film received generally positive reviews and had a great impact both on Greek and foreign audiences. According to Boulmetis the success of the movie aboard is based on the handling of the narrative. As regards its impact in Greece, it was a huge box office and cut approximately 1.3 million tickets until February 2004, as well as winning eight awards at the 44th Film Festival of Thessaloniki (Karouzakis, 2012; Smyrnis, 2013). Despite the commercial success of the film the comments received from both the Greek and foreign press were varied. For instance, the Turkish newspaper *Radikal* spoke of an enchanting movie, while *Gazete Rize* hinted that this film posed a risk to the Turkish national consciousness and stressed that *A Touch of Spice* was a Greek propaganda, which "played" with the Turkish identity (Alpay, 2009; Tasci, 2008). Furthermore, *The New York Times* talked about a movie that made "even cynics weep", but the journalist found the fact that a middle-aged man like Fanis was "still obsessed with infatuations formed before he was ten" a bit exaggerated (Genzlinger, 2009). However, despite the laudatory reviews the film

garnered in Greece, there were also some who spoke of a "bad" screenplay that browses through history and a populist cinema "with predictable components that imitates other films" (translation made by the author) (Fragkoulis). Last but not least, while Boulmetis declares in Karouzakis' article (2012), "I even made a movie by going back, having made peace with my family's departure and separation from the country, having mourned that situation. Despite all this, I still feel a peculiar euphoria by my return to past familiar places", he points out that some were furious with the positive way he presented the Turks (translation made by the author). More specifically, he says "They say they are animals. That we should have depicted them that way [...]. My own father is still angry about what happened, but I can't be" (Karouzakis, 2012; Gibbons, 2003). However, the lesson he received from his parents and relatives was that they should not be angry with the Turkish people per se, and they are not, since the later were not responsible for the deportations. On the contrary, they are angry with the era's system. The director still remembers the cries of their neighbours when they were leaving (Symvoulio Apodimou Ellinismou, 2009).

2.2.1 The Greek-Orthodox of Athens and Constantinople today

In the film *A Touch of Spice*, as analyzed above, the events that led to the uprooting of the Greek-Orthodox and their coming to Greece were described. As can be clearly seen in the movie, the Greek-Orthodox had difficulty adjusting to the host country. Coming to a place they had never before lived in or had no connection to, it makes perfect sense that they could not perceive this place as home. One of the reasons that made the adjustment difficult mainly for those who settled in Athens was the fact that they were frequently treated as Turks. Anastasiadou and Dumont point out that in many cases they were called *Tourkosporoi* (seeds of Turks) (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:46, 67). In addition to this, they also faced livelihood troubles. In the early '60s Greece was plagued by unemployment and the state was unable to provide the newcomers with adequate financial support. Despite the adverse conditions, the Greek-Orthodox managed to stand on their own feet over time and to embrace the Greek national ideals without, however, having forgotten

who they are and where they come from (Iakovidis, 2014:2; Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:67). This is depicted through the fact that they maintained their customs and cultural heritage and as a consequence many of them, although living in a coreligionist and same language community, did not place themselves in the same category with the other Greeks (*Elladites*). According to Ilay Örs, many Greek-Orthodox attributed the main difference to the *Elladites* to their different past and hence their cultural distinctiveness. On the other hand, they did not confess in any way that they were less Greeks, but that actually they differed from the *Elladites*, because they came from Constantinople (Ors, 2006:84-85). Nonetheless, there were those who did not feel "offended" when they were categorized as Greeks or those who considered themselves both as *Grecoturkish* and *Turkogreek*. Örs stresses such a paradigm of a Greek-Orthodox who said "I have two ears. When I go to Turkey I use my Greek ear; and when I am in Greece, I listen with my Turkish ear. My brain brings the two together; I am both *Grecoturkish* and *Turkogreek*" (Ors, 2006:82). According to Örs this attitude is directly linked to the trauma that every Greek-Orthodox experienced and the way each of them chose to cope with (Ors, 2006:82-83).

Many Greek-Orthodox who left in the second half of the 20th century keep in contact with their homeland. The reasons that occasionally lead them back to Constantinople are both emotional and material. Many of them visit relatives who continue living in the city or relatives who are buried there, while others return because they have an estate to look after. The latter in fact have retained the Turkish citizenship in order to be able to preserve their property. Another reason that attracts the Greek-Orthodox from all over the world, back to Constantinople is the social and religious events that take place (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:68-70). The most recent instance is the event organized by the Zografion high school on November 20, 2014, which honored the graduates of 1964 and 1974, while at the same time celebrating 121 years of operation. The following day The Presentation of Mary was celebrated in the church of the Virgin of Pera, the first Christian Orthodox church built by the community during the Ottoman Empire in the 19th

century (1804)[29] (To Vima, 2014; Symvoulio Apodimou Ellinismou, 2009). In these events Greek-Orthodox from Germany, Canada and Greece attended (Zografion high school, personal communication, December 5, 2014). For Anastasiadou and Dumont the reasons that make the Greek-Orthodox return every so often to Constantinople is directly related to their nostalgia of a time long gone. In the events in which they participate, they reminisce of the days of youth and images of a city that no longer exists (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:76).

As far as the value of nostalgia is concerned, it was studied by Svetlana Boym, who explains that during the 17th century nostalgia was considered to be a disease, a curable one however[30], that struck Swiss soldiers fighting abroad, as well as people who were away from their homes. The longing for one's home caused illusions to nostalgics that made them, for instance, hear voices or see ghosts. What is more, they had no sense of time and as a result they confused the past with the present (Boym, 2001:xiv, 3-4). Nonetheless, the curable ailment of the 17th century turned into an incurable one in the 21st century. Boym says "The 20th century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia. […] Somehow progress did not cure nostalgia but exacerbated it. Similarly, globalization encouraged stronger local attachments" (Boym, 2011:xiv). In her work *The future of nostalgia* Boym distinguishes two tendencies of nostalgia. The restorative nostalgia emphasizes *nostos* (return home) and with the nostalgics of this category attempting to rebuild the lost home through invented tradition, which in turn creates a stable framework providing continuity with the past[31] (Boym, 2001:41-42). The second tendency refers to the reflective nostalgia that puts emphasis on *algia* (longing) and it does

[29] The foundation of the church in 1804 marked the establishment of the Stavrodromi (Pera) community and it was ordained that the liturgy for The Presentation of Mary would be celebrated in the Patriarch's presence for all eternity. Beyond the religious character of the event, which attracted and still does many faithful, it took the form of a memorial in honour of all eminents who contributed to the emergence of the Greek-Orthodox element. The church stopped functioning in 2003, because of a bomb attack on the British consulate, near the temple, on the eve of the feast caused damages to the church. The repair of damage was completed in 2009 and since then the church functions again (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:72-73; Symvoulio Apodimou Ellinismou, 2009).

[30] Doctors used leeches, warm hypnotic emulsions, opium and a return to the Alps in order to ease the symptoms of the sickness (Boym, 2001:4).

[31] In order for the mechanism of restorative nostalgia to be understood, the difference between the customs of the past and the invented traditions must be clarified. The first ones are as variable as societies, even the traditional ones change over time, and the traditions are bound to change as well. On the contrary, the swifter the pace of modernization is, the more conservative the invented traditions become (Boym, 2001:42).

not seek to rebuild the past. Reflective nostalgia has to do more with the individual and collective memory. The nostalgics are fully aware of the lost home and what matters is the narration of their stories which connects the past with the present and future. Thus, the past does not remain inactive; instead "it inserts itself into a present sensation from which it borrows the vitality" (Boym, 2001:49-50). In short, we are talking of an active and forward-looking type of nostalgia, which is different from a passive return to the past.

In an attempt to keep alive the memory of the fatherland, the Greek-Orthodox have set up wherever they are societies and associations. In the present paper attention will be paid to the institutions of Athens. The approximately twenty seven societies have as common denominator the support, both moral and material, of their members and the promotion of an intellectual, philanthropic and moral conscience. Of great importance for these societies is the preservation of the Greek-Orthodox identity and through various events they attempt to maintain the Greek-Orthodox element and, if possible, reinforce it (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:76-79). Thus moving around the same axis the "Union of Constantinopolitans" (*Enosis Konstantinoupoliton*), founded in 1981 composed of the "New Cycle of Constantinopolitans" (*Neos Kyklos Konstantinoupoliton*) and the association "Greek nationals deported from Turkey" (*Somateio Ellinon Ypikoon apelathenton ek Tourkias*) attempts to "promote the spiritual and cultural cultivation of all members in the historical past of the Greek-Orthodox population of Constantinople, and other regions of Turkey, especially in the subjects of the Orthodox Christian religion, morals and customs" (Enosis Konstantinoupoliton).

Associations such as the "Study Association of the near East" (*Etaireia Meletis tis Kath' imas Anatolis*) aim to promote research in the near East. Just some of its activities towards this purpose are the publication of scientific and literary journals, the organization of scientific symposiums, whose transcripts are published, the establishment and operation of a library, the organization of scientific events and speeches promoting knowledge regarding the near East (Etaireia Meletis tis Kath' imas Anatolis).

What is more, there are associations which have developed political action. Such an instance is the "Society of Greek Nationals deported from Turkey", founded

in 1964, which among others, dwells on the events of '55 and '64 and exerts pressure on the Turkish government in order for the latter to admit publicly the extortionate measures exerted during the period 1955-1964 against the Greeks, who were expelled with the charge of being traitors. It is noteworthy that in the association's charter a detailed report on this issue is included (Enosis Konstantinoupoliton).

Nonetheless, the role of these institutions is to adapt to the needs of their members. In recent years one of those needs is the dissemination of the Constantinopolitan, cultural heritage to the second generation Greek-Orthodox among which are some who do not identify themselves as Greek-Orthodox or have not visited once Constantinople. The risk of the expatriate Hellenism of severing every missing link with Constantinople sounds the alarm for the Greek-Orthodox associations of Athens, that seek through a multitude of events, publications[32], excursions, exhibitions, musical events and activities for youth and children to stimulate the Greek-Orthodox identity (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:79-81). A recent example is the third festival of Constantinopolitans organized by the "Universal Federation of Constantinopolitans" (OI.OM.KO) on 3-5 October 2014. Judging from the festival's program, most of the events were addressed to children or young people, who in effect were not to be mere spectators but take part in these festivities (Alimosonline, 2014).

As far as Constantinople's Greek-Orthodox community's youth is concerned, "they are not the children of a fearful minority", claimed characteristically in the documentary of Stavros Theodorakis, *Protagonistes* John Gigourtsis, who is a teacher at the Great School of the Nation (translation made by the author) (Theodorakis, 2013). Let at this point be said, that at least the Greek-Orthodox youth is not as fearful as the previous generations, who experienced acute crisis situations[33]. In effect, the young people of the community see things in a different

[32] Besides the book publishing related to Constantinople, newspapers in Athens and Thessaloniki are issued having as a central theme Constantinople. Indicatively, such newspapers are *East* (*Anatoli*), *Constantinopolitan* (*Politis*), *Eptalofos*, *The Pulse of Constantinopolitans* (*O Palmos ton Konstantinoupoliton*) (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:81).

[33] In *Protagonistes* some of the Greek-Orthodox students said that in many cases, for example in some neighbourhoods, they are still afraid to admit their religion or sometimes hide the cross they wear. On the other hand, others say they have never faced such a problem (Theodorakis, 2013).

way. The relative "stabilization" of the Greek-Turkish relations and the demographic collapse of the community, which in turn intensified the phenomenon of mixed marriages, since the Greek-Orthodox when they come of marriageable age are facing the spouse search problem, contributed to this. All the above combined with the fact that the new generation of Turks largely composed of "westernized" younger people, who resist the authoritarian principles of Erdoğan's government that shows them how to live, how many children to give birth to, and interferes in their personal rights (such as the issue of abortions), make easier the exchange-adoption of views and cultures among young people (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007; Theodorakis, 2013).

In the events of the Gezi Park in May 2013, which began as a protest against the destruction of the park that was to be turned into a commercial center by the government, developed into a broader protest against Erdoğan's policy and there were many Greek-Orthodox who participated. Young people argue that there were no political party supporters involved in the incident at Gezi Park. According to Chronis Pechlivanidis (director) fewer Greek-Orthodox in comparison to other minorities participated. He attributes this fact to the still present fear and the "slapping" the Greek-Orthodox minority received during the past years (Theodorakis, 2013). Young people took advantage of the social media to make the situation known and fill the gap in information from the television channels. "Without Twitter, it would not have been understood how big and hard that which happened was" and "Protesters with a mobile became cameramen and reporters, uploaded photos, raw video and texts to the social media" say people who took part in the protests (translation made by the author) (Boboula, 2013).

Of great importance is the fact that there were some voices that accused the minorities for the unrest caused in the country. These voices, although few, came from the field of politics and the academic environment. Specifically, the head of the Yeniköy (*Nihori*) municipality, Engin Cevahiroğlu, blamed the Greek-Orthodox for their active participation in the events of Geza Park, while Professor Ahmet Atan, Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Yildiz University, argued that minorities of the city played an active role in the episodes at Taksim. He concluded with the words "Please, check your kin" implying that the protesters probably were not

genuine Turks (translation made by the author) (Manolakellis, 2013). Although these statements were disapproved by the majority, they awoke old memories. But since Turkey's progress depends mainly on the degree of its democratization, something that both the minorities and the Turkish people acknowledge, the Greek-Orthodox are disposed to resist adversity having on their side this time plethora of Turks who participate mainly in liberal movements (Manolakellis, 2013; Kesisoglou, 2013). Thus, despite the shrinking remaining minority, the Patriarchate has begun the reconstruction of nearly ninety churches since 1990, while four years ago, in collaboration with the Beyoğlu Greek Society it began restoring funerary monuments in the cemetery in Şişli, which was completed in 2014. As a matter of fact, on November 21, 2014 after the mass for the Presentation of Mary, the screening of a documentary on the cemetery of Şişli under the title "Those who Depart this World, Die Only when Forgotten" took place (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:159; Kiousis, 2014; Zikakou, 2014). In the cemetery, which was created in the 19th century initially in the area of Taksim and later transferred to Şişli, rest a number of prominent scientists and entrepreneurs of the community. The fact that since 2005 it borders with a commercial center, made its future uncertain, but in the year 2014 the Greek-Orthodox community proved its will and strong voice (Anastasiadou & Dymon, 2007:264,267). Despite there being many, who regard the community's future as bleak, there are even more who are optimistic. I will close with the words of Stelios Berberis, a cantor of the Patriarchate and performer of Rebetico, "Our title is not "the last Greek-Orthodox of *Polis*". The *Polis* has the power to give birth once again to Greek-Orthodox and hides this power inside of it, because the seed lies here. Wherever the seed went, it originated here" (translation made by the author) (Theodorakis, 2013).

3. Memories remembered memories forgotten: the role of collective memory

Since the present chapter will be based mostly on oral narratives, I will begin with a brief discussion on the contribution of oral narratives in history as well as in other disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology. To begin with, Paul Thompson, professor of social history, reminds us that oral history is the first type of history and refers to Herodotus who relied on witnesses to crosscheck the information he received, while Voltaire criticized the validity of oral tradition claiming that it had "frayed" during transport from one generation to another and insisted that history should be enlightened by philosophy, but he himself made use of oral evidences in his works (Thompson, 2008:22,55,61,63). During the nineteenth century the use of oral sources was sidelined and written documents were considered as the most reliable historical source, however Thompson argues that history acquires a new dimension when using oral testimonies. If one is to take as a given that most of the archives represent the view of power, and as a result history is limited to certain established circles, the usage of people's personal experiences stemming from all backgrounds permits a more equitable and democratic evaluation of the past. If other "voices" from lower social classes are to be taken into account, then the past can be reconstructed in a more realistic way (Thompson, 2008:22, 34-35).

On the other hand, oral narratives entail a certain amount of risk and tend to become insufficient if not properly treated by the historians, who must be versed and skilled in collecting them. For instance, a researcher may conduct interviews and in many cases try to add or remove elements in his notes in order thereby to contribute to the verification of what he attempts to prove. Skill is also required in the selection of the interviewees, who must fulfill certain criteria and be a representative sample of a community, group etc. Regardless the fact, whether this method has positive or negative elements[34] (always dependent on the manner the

[34] The advantages and disadvantages of oral history are not limited in those referred here. However, since the chapter's purpose is not this, there is no extensive reference regarding the benefits and drawbacks.

researcher handles it), it is undoubtedly an integral and necessary part of conducting historical research (Thompson, 2008:51, 166-167).

Moreover, as highlighted in Thompson's book *The voice of the past*, "While oral history cannot be an autonomous "part" of history it is a technique that may be used in any branch of science" (Thompson, 2008:117). Thus, sociology and anthropology, which focus on how people experience social life and participate in it, use oral testimonials. In the following sections, the narratives of people who experienced a traumatic event, like the *Septemvriana*, demonstrate how people identify themselves and share a common past. It is through collective memory that people gain a collective narrative about a mutual past and it is also this process that provides them with a "cognitive map", which defines who they are and where they are going (Thompson, 2008; Eyerman, 2004:161). The fact that the narratives sometimes converge and sometimes not, has to do with the conflict of collective and individual memory, as I will try to illustrate below.

In the first section the case of a cosmopolitan neighbourhood in Istanbul, Kuzguncuk, where people from various backgrounds still living in Constantinople describe the daily coexistence and the riots of September 1955, will be discussed. The residents largely denied that the *Septemvriana* happened in the neighbourhood or they kept quiet about them. This neighbourhood was chosen since due to its multiethnic character and architecture of Ottoman era wooden houses it was often projected in the media and began to be gentrified by 1978 (Mills, 2008:387). The second section will make use of narratives from members of the Greek-Orthodox community from different areas in Constantinople. The narratives I used in this section come from people who today live in Greece. The reason I selected narratives told in Greece is to compare them with those narrated in Kuzguncuk. I will try to illustrate the different perspective the Greek-Orthodox, who live now in Greece, have of the *Septemvriana* and their daily life and relations with the Turks, Armenians and Jews. In this case, the tellers describe the events as they happened, without trying to avoid them or keeping quiet.

3.1 "We were all brothers"[35]: The case of the *Kuzguncuk* neighbourhood

Kuzguncuk is a neighbourhood on the Asian side of Constantinople which is known for its past cosmopolitan character, since before the anti-minority riots of September 1955 it was a multiethnic mosaic composed of Muslims, Greeks, Armenians and Jews. The research conducted by Amy Mills is based on place narratives that put emphasis on the nostalgia for a "home" that no longer exists and the function of individual and collective memory as well. All narratives related to the daily past life in Kuzguncuk are sharing a common image. The neighbourhood is described as the ideal place to live, as all residents, regardless their ethnicity or religion, used to participate in each other's religious and social activities, shared the food and used to stroll together on summer evenings (Mills, 2008; Mills, 2010:107). Mills (2010) quotes a part of Güngör Dilmen's play:

> Mistakes were quickly repaired. To apologise was like a cure. Tough guys would never yell in front of the church, nor at Nightingale Greek. Good manners were something one took very seriously as rituals performed sincerely, never just for show. Let's walk together up Icadiye[36], to its end in the evening. From neighbour to neighbour, little trays, plates, bowls coming and going, covered with care as if the saying, "What's cooked at the neighbours' will come to us" was written for Icadiye. Sweets would go, stuffed grape leaves would go, and pudding would come back… The fragrance is gone, the neighbour is longed for (pp. 107-108).

Güngör describes the neighborhood as a gorgeous place were kinship and amity prevailed. Now in present time, he reminisces the past and actually mourns for the lost neighbourhood, fragrance, for the absolute home (Mills, 2010:108). The following narrative highlights the strong relations developed between people of different ethnoreligious backdrop and especially the teller points out the close relations between Muslims and Jews (Mills, 2010):

[35] The phrase was taken from Amy Mills' work *Streets of memory: Landscape, tolerance, and national identity in Istanbul* (Mills, 2010:107).
[36] *Icadiye* is the main street of Kuzguncuk.

> The unleavened bread for the Passover holiday was made by hand. A family friend would make a neat little packet of it for us. That Jewish family took care of me. At that time everyone was together; there was no difference except in a name. When someone from the [Christian] community died, Muslims would go to the church […] Everything was good [with people] from the beginning, without asking for anything…The Jews and Greeks did the best embroidery. The women did it in their homes…[A Jewish neighbour] would ask me to come and talk to her so she wouldn't fall asleep while she was working, and I would finish the edges for her or read aloud a novel. We'd sit three or four nights in a row (pp. 115-116).

The repeated story about the beauty of Kuzguncuk produces the collective memory through which the residents share a common tie with the neighborhood and consequently a common identity, that of *Kuzguncuklu*[37]. For Maurice Halbwachs memory is a social process and more precisely, "It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (Mills, 2010:111; Halbwachs, 1992:38). He argues that it is impossible for individuals to remember if they are not members of a group. Actually, he supports that "only group members remember" and if the autobiographical memories are not shared by other members, they eventually fade away (Halbwachs, 1992:24). Such paradigms of collective memory are also depicted in the following testimonies, described by Mills (2010), from a middle-aged Muslim man:

> There used to be Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews. On Sundays everyone would walk side by side on Icadiye Street. It was very pleasant. They were all one, all being Kuzgucuklu. There are a mosque and church next to each other in Kuzguncuk [...] My teacher was Greek; he had to go back to Greece but he didn't want to. We saw troubles...They [the non-Muslims] were quality people [...] We had a football team and played football together. The team was mixed Jewish and Armenian, but beacuse there were many more Greeks they made up their own team. Kuzguncuk changed a lot. No one is left. It was a mosaic, but not one beautiful thing remained (pp. 113-114).

[37] In Turkish the suffix -lu/-lü/-lı/-li after a place name suggests the origin. Hence, *Kuzguncuklu* indicates someone who is from Kuzguncuk.

While in another article of his, Mills quotes (2008):

> That place we grew up, it was the place we lived, our place, our citizens, from local Greeks, Armenians, with Turkish citizens; all of us there were like siblings… We had a beautiful life…We were all like siblings; we had no problems… All of us there never argued, all of us, from poor to rich we loved each other very much; there were never any divisions, no divisions like "I'm rich, you're poor". We lived such a life in Kuzguncuk, though now of course, I don't know… I left Kuzguncuk thirty-five years ago… I grew up there and still until now I can speak Greek, rather a lot ... because I would go out and we had friendships with Greeks…The Muslims there would even speak our language, you know. They spoke Spanish; it was such a beautiful life, Ottoman times I can say. I don't remember the Ottoman city, I didn't grow up in Ottoman times, but what remains there of the Ottomans is very beautiful… Because we are Kuzguncuklu Jews, our Muslims over there loved us very much. Loved us very much (p. 383).

Both cases represent the peaceful coexistence of all different communities, the close frindship and the absense of any arguments. They seem to long to be *Kuzguncuklu* and be included as part and take on the identity of this neighbourhood. That is, they "mourn" for the loss of their common neighborhood identity. What is more, in the first narrative the man refers to the deparure of the non-Muslims but he avoids to stress the reason. In the second case, the same "silence" can be observed ("I left Kuzguncuk thirty-five years ago"), while he contrasts the past situation by saying that there were no divisions, implying that now they exist and when he refers to the beauty of the Ottoman past, which he did not experience, implicitly he compares the Ottoman times with the present Turkish national situation (Mills, 2010:114; Mills, 2008:383).

The fact that the collective memory of the *Kuzguncuklus* reproduces a perfect place, where there were no distinctions between the various ethnic groups, has to do with the fact that these people, Muslims and non-Muslims, experienced a traumatic event (*Septemvriana*). According to the authors of *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, regarding the post-war Yugoslavia and Rwanda, people who had experienced similar traumas tended to idealize the past and talked about an ideal coexistence with other

different groups, but as the authors observe this "perfect" life was actually an illusion. More precisely, they claim that people "failed to acknowledge that ethnic divisions had begun to occur in the years and months before the war" and it is estimated that their memories are muddled either due to the trauma or to their need to believe in that past in order to balance the miserable present (Doumanis, 2013:55).

Similarly, the people of Kuzguncuk idealized the past due to the traumatic experience of the *Septemvriana*. However, unlike the above case, where the refugees are accused of "ignoring" the political changes that occurred, the *Kuzguncuklus* were aware of the distinctiveness that "separated" them. Thus, with the exception of the testimonies glorifying the local collective memory, there are narratives that illustrate the existence of ethnic-religious differences, which were kept in balance but also were the seed that led to fragmentation (Mills, 2010:117). Particularly, a Muslim woman (Mills, 2010) says:

> In those days the main street was a creek; it was a clean place…We used to walk around along the seaside…There were Greeks and Jews, all friends together, everyone was close and loved to help each other… We had close Jewish friends, but they all sold their houses and went. When they were going to Palestine they were on boat and someone exploded the boat and they all died. We were all very sad about it. We loved Jewish people. When they were sick we went to them. When you were sick, they would always come to you […] We celebrated Jewish holidays and ate unleavened bread with them. We celebrated Easter with Greek friends and went to the church to light a candle […] We didn't go to the synagogue. The Jews didn't go there much either […] But everyone went to the church (p. 117).

Although this woman repeats the collective story about Kuzguncuk and the neighbourliness among people, she makes a clear separation of religious identity, partial however, since she says that they (Muslims) visited the Orthodox churches, but not the synagogues (Mills, 2010:117-118). She also adds, maybe as an excuse, that neither the Jews went frequently to the synagogues. Furthermore, she talks about the departure of the Jews and the tragic outcome of the incident with the boat, yet she does not make any reference to the cause that led to their departure.

What is more, when the conversation comes to the events of September 1955, the majority of individual narratives falls into contradictions. Although Vryonis affirms that the riots also spread in Kuzguncuk, though they were of a smaller scale due to a coincidence[38], the *Kuzguncuklus*, both Muslims and non-Muslims, in an attempt to preserve the collective memory, either avoid confessing openly that violence took place in the neighbourhood, or support that such events never happened there, or even put the blame on *outsiders* (rural Muslims coming from Anatolia). However, in the place narratives the collective memory is "betrayed" in a fashion either by hashing up or by omitting information, or the narratives include contradictions, while there are others who speak, more rarely, openly about the existing tensions (Mills, 2010:110, 112; Vryonis, 2007:237). Thus, while two Greek women claim that their Turkish friends protected the church and other Greek friends of them, they go on to add that (Mills, 2010):

> Neighbourliness has disappeared. *After the 6-7 September events, places died*. In the old days there was civilization. Between Jew, Armenian, and Greek, there was no rudeness. Then when they began to come (the rural migrants) it got ruined. There used to be two hundred thousand Greeks in Istanbul, but everyone has left. Jews went to Israel […] Kuzguncuk used to be a beautiful place (pp. 122-123).

Another elderly Muslim woman says (Mills, 2010):

> *The 6-7 September events didn't happen in Kuzguncuk*, but I heard about it. They stole…vandalism…it happened in [the districts of] Beyoğlu, Eminönü, and Sultanahmet. Our people [Muslims] put them [minorities] out in the street. Oh, the things that happened, the things that happened…Sounds of tanks were heard here. The noise carried from the other side of the city […] On that night they destroyed the churches…I had three or four Christian friends and I protected them; they stayed in my house. Then after that the Greeks began to leave and go to America; my friends left. My close friends…during the bad times they stayed with me for fifteen days…After the 6-7 September riots, they began to look for reasons to make the Greeks and Armenians leave […] Turks, Jews, Armenians were not

[38] Vryonis cites a witness, according to which thanks to muhtar and an officer's mediation the disembarkation of demonstrators in the neighbourhood was prevented. That is why the damages were not so extensive (Vryonis, 2007:237).

> separate in those times. There was no anger at each other. It was when the doctor was killed in Cyprus that it got bad here [this is her explanation for why the 1955 riots started]. Then *those who came from Anatolia did it to us*. They took their goods; they hit the churches; there were Turkish houses next to the churches. It was the people who came from Anatolia who did it. They broke into the houses; they tied the tanks' wheels and tore fabrics in the houses…*We heard sounds*…They cut the rugs; they ruined things; they took the mattresses of the beds and cut them and threw the wool out of the windows. They broke the glass […] *What sins were committed here* […] We killed those who did bad things to us. We protected those who were good. In was it wasn't normal time (pp.124-125).

The above narrative presents contradictions related to the *Septemvriana*. While the woman initially declares that the riots did not happen in Kuzguncuk and describes the events that she heard about, in the course of her narration, she describes the riots that happened in the neighbourhood in sufficient detail. In addition, she talks about a war situation, through which she tries to justify the events (Mills, 2010:125). Additionally, on the one hand she sympathizes with minorities saying "*Those who came from Anatolia did it to us*", while later she cites herself between those who committed the atrocities claiming that *"We killed who did bad things to us"*. According to Mills, the ambiguities of this narration are related to the juxtaposition between collective and individual memory. At the beginning of the narrative ("The 6-7 September events didn't happen in Kuzguncuk"), the Muslim woman retains the collective memory and speaks both as a member of the neighbourhood, namely as a *Kuzguncuklu*, and broadly as a Turkish citizen, protecting in that way also the state's narrative, which denies the riots against the non-Muslim minorities. Later on, when she talks about the riots that happened in Kuzguncuk she "betrays" the collective memory and describes what she saw and experienced as an individual (Mills, 2010:110,125).

In the testimony that follows, although the narrator tries to defend the collective memory, the divisions between Muslims and non-Muslims are clearly indicated. The Jewish interviewee, who tells the story as heard from his parents, refers not only to those who came from Anatolia but also to some other Muslims, *Kuzguncuklus*, who actually contributed in some way to the riots. More precisely (Mills, 2010):

> The 6-7 September events were very dramatic, very sad in Kuzguncuk, and Jews were also affected by these negative events. But in Kuzguncuk Greek houses were pillaged and vandalized with stones and it was done by people who came from Anatolia, although *some of the Turks here showed them the way*, saying, "This house is Greek; throw it over there; this house is Jewih; don't throw a stone here". These are sad things but they were *done by those who came later*. In Kuzguncuk whether Muslim, Greek, Armenian, Jewish, there was a good relationship between them, there was a good feeling of siblinghood. This was a very sensitive time (p. 126).

The tensions depicted in the above narration are also found in the words of a non-Muslim couple, when the husband affirms openly "This was a terrible event that happened all over the city. The riots were not just near Beyoğlu like people think. It was a mad, crazy violence that happened in Kuzguncuk, too", while his wife adds "terrible things happened to girls in their homes" (Mills, 2010:126).

To conclude, from all these narrations it becomes evident that there were in fact ethnic-religious distinctions between the different ethnic groups. In spite of neighbourliness, religion was a significant factor that shaped individual identity. Actually, the place narratives reveal a complicated space, where religion was a separation element, since it created different religious identities, on one hand, while simultaneously ties to a local place constructed a common identity, that of *Kuzguncuklu*. Specifically, Güngör Dilmen, an extract of whose work has been quoted at the beginning of this section describing the peaceful coexistence of all residents regardless their ethnicity or religion, goes on to describe in the same play (Mills, 2010):

> Ekrem [a Muslim Kuzguncuklu]: So everything was all smiles and happiness?
>
> Ali [a Muslim Kuzguncuklu]: No dear, that would have been counter to human nature! There were also irritations and arguments.
>
> Ekrem: When we'd call them "heathen" how quickly they'd be against us…hesitant to say anything…
>
> Saranda [a Christian Kuzguncuklu]: With the wisdom that comes from being a minority! (p. 127).

Yet, it was the riots of 1955 that made these divergences visible. Saranda's last words confirm how the state's nationalism discriminated between the identities of national Turks and minorities. The fact that the events of 1955 were concealed in most narratives and Kuzguncuk was remembered as a cosmopolitan place where tolerance prevailed is what makes one a *Kuzguncuklu*. Evidently, forgetting is part of the collective memory. However, the forgetting or remembering of the riots serves in different ways to express the *Kuzguncuklu* identity. For Muslims to remember the old days of peaceful coexistence with minorities and then their departure, confirms their identity as *Kuzguncuklus*. Regarding the minority members however, the recollection of the departures certifies their otherness (Mills, 2010).

3.2 The collective memory of a community

The case of Kuzguncuk is not the only one in Constantinople. The cosmopolitan character of the neighbourhood is found also in other areas of the city, where people from different ethnoreligious backgrounds coexisted. As mentioned above the aim of this section is to describe the daily life before the *Septemvriana* as well as the riots of 6-7 September 1955 as experienced by members of the Greek-Orthodox community living in different districts of Constantinople, who now reside in Greece. The oral narratives I used in this part of my thesis were taken from the Historical Archive of the Refugee Hellenism (*Istoriko Archeio Prosfygikou Ellinismou*) of the Municipality of Kalamaria, Thessaloniki and they form a mere sample and not a consolidated position. Despite the fact that most of the narratives reveal a nostalgia for the past and the good days that are now long gone, at the same time they bring to the surface a suspicion that characterized the relationship of the Greek-Orthodox especially with the Turks. Thus when a man, who lived in Cihangir, a neighbourhood close to Beyoğlu (Pera), and came to Athens after the deportation of 1964 was asked about the relations with the Turks, he replied:

> In our block of flats there were Greeks and Turks. I do not remember any Jews and Armenians, but we were many Greeks in the block of flats…With the Turks…good relations, namely…there was let's say… Our parents had good relations with the Turks, we did not

> have any problems with the roommates in the apartment building…There was a suspicion, however in relation to the Turks (translation made by the author) (Pitsou, 2009).

A woman from Arnavutköy (*Mega Revma*) when asked what language they spoke at home and if they were bothered by the Turks when they spoke Greek outside home says:

> Greek, Greek…no dear we loved each other anyway. We lived well. I can't say differently. Of course we had our good days and bad days, but we did not experience what happens in the world today. We loved each other […] We played together only with Turks. In our village there were no Greeks. All were Turks. One-two families were Greek, elderly people […] We had no relations with the Turks but we did not avoid them. When we had to go somewhere we did [she means to some social events of the Turks to which they were invited] (translation made by the author) (Kazantzidou, 2008).

Furthermore, when she is asked whether the Turks respected their religious holidays, like the Epiphany and Easter she responds:

> Yes, yes, yes. Most of them. Look now, the Turks have another mentality. They are very…nationalists. And if they stir up, in their nationalism…oh dear…when they say "giaour", they mean it. Do you know with how much hatred they said it? In the *Septemvriana* we suffered a lot. A lot (translation made by the author) (Kazantzidou, 2008).

As it becomes evident, the woman's narrative includes contradictions. On the one hand, she claims that they loved each other and that their relations were like all human ones with good and bad times. What is more, as a child she was playing with other Turkish children, given that in her neighbourhood (*Kuruçeşme, Ksirokrini in Greek*) the majority of residents were Turks with the latter respecting the Christian religious holidays. On the other hand, she points out that they (the Greek-Orthodox) did not seek to establish relations with Turks and highlights the latter's nationalism hinting at the events of September 1955 and the suffering that the Greek-Orthodox experienced.

The following narrative comes from a middle-aged man from Arnavutköy (*Mega Revma*), who currently lives in Thessaloniki. Like the previous two interviewees, he reminisces his childhood with nostalgia saying that when he was a child he used to play together with Armenian, Turkish and Jewish children, stressing characteristically "That is why we were a cosmopolitan city. Constantinople in general has tradition". Nonetheless he speaks more openly than the previous two interviewees about the differences that "separated" the Turks from the Greek-Orthodox, the Muslims from the non-Muslims. More precisely:

> At the place we were born we were persecuted if we spoke our language in public places, especially when certain events happened, either in '55 or '64. Generally, when there were turbulences with the Cyprus issue, people fanatisized and they glowered at us on the bus or in public places or when we went for a walk. In general, those years Pera was full of Greeks and when they heard us speak Greek, they told us to speak in their language. They insulted us, this issue bothered us […] In this way they poisoned us and we felt uncomfortable! In the country we were born! In the town we lived! These are some experiences, I have never been able to forget (translation made by the author) (Kazantzidou, 2008).

And he continues by describing their relations with the Turks:

> At home we spoke Greek. Turkish not at all. First of all, our circle of acquaintances included only Greek-speaking people. Our parties consisted of Greeks. Our church, our school…We came into contact with very few Turks […] With people of other religions and ethnicities we only had professional relations, not friendly […] We were quite a closed society. Everything stayed between us. If someone [man or woman] were to have a relationship with a Turk, oh my God! Not because the Turkish youngs were not good, but generally people avoided them […] *Unfortunately, even my nephew married a Turkish woman last year*. My cousin, who has a travel agency in Constantinople, is quite well off. She no longer is suppressed. She feels herself equal to the Turks and her complaint is this; that her son married a Turkish woman. And she refers to this with bitterness and wells up. But there are no girls any more [He means there are not girls form the Greek-Orthodox community] […] The main [Turkish] newspapers were all anti-Greek. I do not remember any holding a neutral position. B*eing anti-Greek is generally considered to be patriot* (translation made by the author) (Kazantzidou, 2008).

What stems from this narrative, apart from the nostalgia for the cosmopolitanism of the city during his childhood, is that the state's nationalism, -I am not referring only to the events of September, but to the whole Turkification policy the state applied from its foundation onwards- created distinctions and produced different categories of belonging as a "Turk" or "minority" (Mills, 2008). The narrative stresses this otherness due to which the Greek-Orthodox formed a quite closed community, as well as avoided socializing with people of different ethnicities and religions. What is more, although he admits that the Turkish youngs are good people, he objects to his nephew's marriage with a Turkish woman and stresses his cousin's complaint about this marriage.

As far as the riots of September 1955 per se are concerned, the collective narrative describes the anti-minority events in detail, in contrast to the prevailed "silence" encountered in narratives by the *Kuzguncuklus* (both Muslims and non-Muslims). On the other hand, many of the interviewees report moments they received assistance by their Muslim neighbours and friends during the *Septemvriana*. The man who narrated the above, when asked about the *Septemvriana*, described how the Turkish neighbours, among them his Turkish teacher, Mekrube, protected them. Thanks to his teacher, who roused all the Turskish women of the neighborhood, a protective net was formed around the house pretending to laugh at the sufferings of the Greek-Orthodox and he continues describing the disasters:

> [...]down in the corner, 50 meters away from our house, lay Ikonomou's grocery store. It had been ravaged. It had been looted. They had grabbed the most valuable things, loaded them in trucks and left. And the rest, everything that they could not be carried was set on fire. They burned evetything in the center of the store. And that smell, it will never leave my nose, never in my life! [...] Rapes occured and there were deaths...all the churches were destroyed. No church remained whole (translation made by the author) (Kazantzidou, 2008).

When asked from the woman already mentioned at the beginning of this section to begin recounting the events of 1955, she said "What to? What to say? I

don't know. These stories confuse me". Then, the woman taking the interview started to ask her some information and she replied:

> We had just sat down…soup. We had boiled meat at that time, I will never forget it. And as soon as we sat, some stones come through the windows, because the house was surrounded by open space. They broke our dishes, forks, windows, everything! Nothing was left standing. Only my sister's room…the rest of the house was turned upside down. They left nothing. They entered from the back door, destroyed everything and then moved to the front. They passed through the front door and left. They made a bundle out of my sister's things and put blankets and quilts inside! They left us with nothing. My father and brother in law didn't even have any pants to wear the next day […] We were inside the house, but when they started hurling stones the next door neighbours invited us to go to them. The one side broke us [she means that they caused disasters] and the other protected us. And he was a very poor man, a great man. Despite having six children he invited us there […] Meanwhile, the other neighbour in order not to be seen as doing nothing went to the market ... he did what he did, he helped there supposedly by breaking something and returned home [...] Now that I remember these scenes... again ... I am reliving them. Anyway (translation made by the author) (Kazantzidou, 2008).

The fact that the woman is asked to start the narration concerning the *Septemvriana* on her own and is unable to respond, claiming that these stories confuse her, it is related to the traumatic events of that September. According to neurobiologists Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart a traumatic experience is recorded in the brain differently from a common memory. They argue that the part of the brain that actually "classifies" the memories, which is called hippocampus, in cases of traumatic situations it is suppressed and "results in amnesia for the specifics of traumatic experiences but not the feelings associated with them" (Whitehead, 2009:115). Judith Herman, a psychiatrist contemporary to Pierre Janet, argues that the only way for someone to confront traumatic memories is to integrate them into his/her life's narrative. Since the traumatic memory initially is not remembered, "it is the narrative integration that produces the memory of the traumatic event". Traumatic memory may sometimes be "wordless and static", just like in our case (Sturken, 1998:108). Despite the woman's willingness to begin recounting, she feels confused and ultimately fails to say anything. Only with the

help of the woman who conducts the interview and starts to pose questions the interviewee starts talking about the events and gives details about what exactly happened in her family home. She also adds that when the first stones were hurled at their house they went to a neighbouring house of a Turk who protected them, which means that she was not present when the rioters pillaged her house. So far she narrates what she experienced as an individual. Later, she defends the Turkish neighbour who supposedly took part in the disasters ("he helped there supposedly by breaking something and returned home"), preserving the collective narrative of good neighbourliness.

The struggle between individual and collective memory is found in the following narratives, where the informants on the one hand recall the riots against them and consequently the proof of their otherness and on the other hand they support that the rioters were not from Constantinople in an attempt to maintain their collective identity, as Constantinopolitans. A man who was not yet born when the riots broke out recounts the *Septemvriana* as heard from his parents:

> As my mother and father told me they broke everything. They marked the houses beforehand and then came and broke them. But our house…they did not damage it, because the doorman, was Turkish and he protected us […] Those who came and committed the crimes were from Asia; they were not Constantinopolitans […] The Constantinopolitan Turks protected us to a great extent (translation made by the author) (Pitsou, 2009).

A woman from the Beyoğlu (Pera) district recalls that during the events they were not bothered and she justifies this notion by saying that the rioters did not enter to the city's houses, instead of the villages' ones, where not only had they entered but also they "bothered" the young girls. Then she says that her family found protection thanks to a neighbouring Turkish family. Specifically,

> In 1955 I was nine years old and I remember seeing outside things thrown on the ground, the churches burned. The Turks entered the stores and removed the new shoes, leaving the old ones; in the patisseries they had thrown everything on the ground…they took new clothes and left old ones behind. But…this situation…if something leaves a strong

> impression, you remember it even if you are a kid […] But since we lived in the city they had not come into our homes. In some villages around here they had entered the houses and bothered the girls […] Next to us lived a very good [Turkish] family. When the troubles happened, the man did not take part, he just pretended to be sitting on the balcony and applauding them, in order for them to leave him alone and not attack him for not getting involved. And he said [to her mother] "Mrs. Malvina, go inside and sit and if something happens, all of you come and sit here" […] The majority of those who started the troubles were from the provinces. What I mean, the refined citizens of Polis were not […] After the events of September 1955 the Polis changed… we were more guarded (translation made by the author) (Kazantzidou, 2008).

Despite the woman describing that the riots took place in Beyoğlu, she claims that the mob did not invade the homes of the city's residents. On the contrary, this only occurred in areas outside the city. Moreover, she emphasizes the good relations with the Turkish neighbours, who both offered them their house as shelter and actually did not participate actively in violence. She goes on to claim that the rioters were not Constantinopolitans, retaining in that way the nostalgia for the place and the collective identity. However, her last words regarding the change after the events ("After the events of 1955, Constantiple changed...we became more guarded") demonstrate the existing difference between Turkisk Constantinopolitans and Greek Constantinopolitans, with the latter to be the "other".

In another interview a man speaks directly about the distinctions of Turks and Greek-Orthodox, the fear and persecution they felt before and during the riots of September 1955:

> The fear began since the beginning of the Cyprus issue. Well, there was also fear before that. The Turk never loved the Greek. The Turk was always pretending, as did we. But after the events of September 1955, they openly expressed their dislike (translation made by the author) (Ioannidou, 1995).

When asked if there was pressure for religious issues he responds:

> Of course they pressured us, but we were more fanatic. First of all, they intercepted us on our way to church; the common people, not the state. We argued and fought and thus we

> became even more fanatic and went to our church [...] During religious celebrations we went to the church but we faced difficulties. They sat in the churchyard. The Turks caused trouble. We tried to be patient or sometimes even fought (translation made by the author) (Ioannidou, 1995).

Regarding the events he says:

> Around 11 a.m., when we were sleeping, we heard a sound, they were breaking and ravaging, but they were not those from our neighbourhood. Those who were from our neighbourhood went to another neighbourhood in order not to be recognised. They came with trucks from other neighbourhoods carrying bats and axes and they [the rioters] entered into the houses, pillaged them and whatever was left they broke and ravaged it. They entered our house too. We were stunned. There were ten people in our house and it filled with at least a hundred people. They took almost everything. They left nothing. They were looking to find girls. We had a sister…we hid her under my mother's bed (translation made by the author) (Ioannidou, 1995).

This testimony illustrates in a stronger way the distinction created by the nationalism at a state level. More specifically, the teller claims that both sides (Turks and Greek-Orthodox) always pretended and the fear on the part of the Greek-Orthodox always existed. He does not attempt to defend his neighbours. In comparison to the previous narratives, he instead openly claims that they took part in the riots but they went to other areas so as not to be recognized. Furthermore, he declares that no Turk had told them what would happen to them and he results "It is what they say; a Greek with a Turk cannot be friends".

Comparing the above cases, namely the stories from Kuzguncuk told both by Muslims and non-Muslims who still live in Kuzguncuk, with those told by the Greek-Orthodox, who recounted stories from other neighbourhoods and who do not live anymore in Constantinople, a noteworthy difference emerges. The collective memory and consequently narrative of the *Kuzguncuklus,* which is characterized by a dominant "silence" over the riots complies with the state's narrative which denied the violence against the minorities and generally ignored minorities for the sake of a purely Turkish (ethnically) state. On the contrary, the narratives of the Greek-

Orthodox are more enlightening given that they do not avoid speaking openly both about the events of September 1955 and the wider anti-minority policy of the state, with all the consequences this entails, and which ultimately the Greek-Orthodox had to suffer through. They speak without inhibitions, probably because they now live away from the place of origin and therefore in another national context. They do not live in fear of possible repercussions and under the thumb of oppression.

Conclusions

What emerges from the above mentioned is that despite the long-suffering historical course of the Greek-Orthodox community, it managed to survive, although its future is in question. Descendants of the Eastern Roman Empire, members of the *Rum milleti* during the Ottoman Empire, the Greek-Orthodox managed thanks to the reforms of the *Tanzimat*, which guaranteed some freedoms, to hold high offices within the government and be recruited for educational, administrative, judiciary even diplomatic posts. Nonetheless, the changes that took place over the transition from the Ottoman Empire to a new secular state in 1923, affected the flourishing of the Greek-Orthodox community as well. The Turkification policy followed by the newly established state was essentially intended to exclude the non-Muslim minorities, whose rights were recognized by the Lausanne Treaty, yet systematically neglected by the Turkish state.

The historical course of the Greek-Orthodox did not leave unaffected both the Greek and Turkish cinema. The *Pains of Autumn*, a film which is viewed from the Turkish perspective, illustrates fairly objectively the riots of September 1955 by providing a clear picture of Turkish nationalism and its consequences on the Greek-Orthodox community. Financially and psychologically fragmented, the Greek-Orthodox lost any trust towards the Turkish state for fair and equal treatment. Some of them left Constantinople, some were unable to leave, while some others remained in defiance of the antiminority atmosphere that stroke all sectors of the community's life. Tassos Boulmetis' semiautobiographical film *A Touch of Spice* puts emphasis on the memory and nostalgia for the lost homeland -an active and forward-looking type of nostalgia though- as well as the way the community's identity was stigmatized both by the traumatic experience of the deportations and their arrival in Athens, where the Greeks received them as Turks. Such treatments reinforced the nostalgia for the place of origin, which is finds release both by frequent trips to Constantinople and through the establishment of associations that aim, inter alia, to preserve and nowadays mostly to help disseminate the Greek-Orthodox culture and identity to the younger generations. The image of the

community in Constantinople does not differ a lot from that in Athens. The fact that the youth, Turkish and Greek-Orthodox, is closer to each other than it used to be in the past, causes concern to the community's members-guardians, who are struggling to keep alive the Greek-Orthodox heritage and identity.

The role of collective memory is of great significance for the preservation of identity. The collective memory, which includes the remembering or forgetting of events, provides members of a community with a collective narrative through which they share a common past that ultimately defines who they are today, how they came here and where they are going. However, collective memory is sometimes "betrayed" by the individual memories and thus, though in very few cases, some *Kuzguncuklus* spoke openly about the violence of the Septemvriana, instead of the Greek-Orthodox residing now in Greece who mostly referred in detail to those riots. What makes these narratives differ so much is the national context in which they are told.

The issue arising from the historical course of the Greek-Orthodox community in Constantinople raises questions about its future. Is it possible for the community to continue to exist and multiply or is it doomed to disappear? Related to this, there are those who choose to look at the future with optimism, despite the fact that it is no longer possible to talk about a purely Greek-Orthodox community, since the issue of mixed marriages is now an inescapable reality. Moreover, the activity of the Greek-Orthodox outside of Constantinople contributes in an important way to the community's preservation. Last but not least, the possible accession of Turkey to the European Union is an encouraging factor for those who are optimistic, although the road is long. On the other hand, however, in recent years Turkey shows a more conservative face towards not only minorities, but also to native Turks. Evidently, the issue of the fate of the Greek-Orthodox community in Constantinople remains to be explored. The answers lay rather in the political developments that are imminent in Turkey.

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